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Ex-cop 'asked' to arrest RSS Chief in Malegaon blast

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India collects ₹1.96 lakh crore record GST in July

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SALAR

DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

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Ties not driven by 3rd parties: India to Trump over Russia

Sources say India declined Trump's offer to buy F-35 jets

NEW DELHI, 1 AUG

Despite sharp criticism and a sweeping 25 per cent tariff imposed by US President Donald Trump, India on Friday affirmed that its partnership with the United States has weathered "transitions and challenges" and will continue to progress.

New Delhi's statement comes in response to Trump's latest trade overhaul, which levies a flat 25 per cent tariff on Indian goods, while reducing tariffs for Pakistan (from 29 per cent to 19 per cent) and Bangladesh (from 35 per cent to 20 per cent) as part of new bilateral agreements. The changes affect over 90 nations.

India's Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) emphasised that its energy procurement decisions are driven by market dynamics and global circumstances. This was in response to Trump's repeated criticism and imposition of a "penalty" over India's continued purchase of Russian petroleum.

MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal reiterated that India and Russia share a "steady and time-tested partnership", and urged that India's bilateral relations not be viewed through the "prism" of a third country. Jaiswal also highlighted India's strong defence ties with the US, even as tensions mount.

25 per cent

TARIFF ON INDIAN GOODS

while reducing tariffs for Pakistan (from 29 per cent to 19 per cent) and Bangladesh (from 35 per cent to 20 per cent) as part of new bilateral agreements. The changes affect over 90 nations

Trump's criticism extended beyond trade. He described the Indian economy as "dead" and accused New Delhi of maintaining "strenuous and obnoxious" non-monetary trade barriers.

Meanwhile, Indian refiners are reportedly pausing Russian crude purchases in response to shifting market conditions.

Sources also said that India has declined Trump's offer to purchase the F-35 stealth fighter jets, instead favouring joint defence production within India.

The friction appears to reflect Washington's growing link between economic policy and geopolitical alignment. Senator Marco Rubio criticised India for indirectly sustaining Russia's military efforts.

Speculation is swirling around Trump's motivations, with some suggesting his irritation stems from India not endorsing his ceasefire claims or nominating him for the Nobel Peace Prize—as Pakistan did. —*PTI*

Prajwal Revanna convicted for rape, sentencing today

BENGALURU, 1 AUG

Prajwal Revanna at court premises, in Bengaluru on Friday **PHOTO: PTI**

Former JD(S) MP Prajwal Revanna was on Friday convicted by a Special Court in Bengaluru in one of four sexual abuse and rape cases filed against him. The quantum of punishment will be announced on Saturday by Special Judge Santosh Gajanan Bhat.

The case relates to the rape of a 48-year-old domestic worker employed at the Revanna family's Gannikada farmhouse in Holenarasipura, Hassan district. The victim was allegedly raped twice in 2021—once in Hassan and once in Bengaluru—with the acts recorded by Revanna on his mobile phone.

The court proceedings concluded on July 18, but the verdict was deferred to August 1 for clarification on mobile location data and technical evidence. Revanna, visibly shaken, broke down as the verdict was read out.

The Special Investigation Team (SIT), which probed the case, filed a 1,632-page chargesheet in September 2024, including statements from 113 witnesses. Revanna was booked under multiple sections of the IPC, including 376(2)(k), 376(2)(n), 354A, 354B, 354C, 506, and 201, along with Section 66E of the IT Act.

Special Public Prosecutor Ashok Nayak said the prosecution presented 26 witnesses and 180 documents, with key evidence including the victim's testimony, digital proof, DNA and FSL reports, and clothing seized years after the incident.

"This is a victory for the victim," said Nayak. Additional SPP B N Jagadeesha added, "The court accepted the prosecution's case in full."

Revanna, 34, grandson of former prime Minister HD Deve Gowda, was arrested on 31 May 2024 at Bengaluru Airport after returning from Germany.

The cases came to light in April after explicit videos were circulated in Hassan. He was suspended from the JD(S) soon after. —*PTI*

India bins UK report on 'transnational repression'

NEW DELHI, 1 AUG

India has firmly rejected a British parliamentary report that named it among countries allegedly engaging in "transnational repression" in the UK, calling the claims "baseless". The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said the allegations were based on "unverified and dubious sources" linked to banned entities and individuals with a history of anti-India activity. "We categorically reject these baseless allegations," MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said, questioning the report's credibility due to its reliance on discredited sources. The UK Parliament's Joint Committee on Human Rights listed India alongside nations such as China, Pakistan, and Russia in its report, Transnational Repression in the UK, released on 30 July. Some claims were sourced from pro-Khalistan group Sikhs for Justice, banned in India. —*PTI*

HC quashes media gag in Dharmasthala case

BENGALURU, 1 AUG

The Karnataka High Court on Friday struck down a media gag order imposed by a lower court in the Dharmasthala mass burials case, calling it an unconstitutional curb on free speech. Justice M Nagaprasanna said the public's right to know cannot be suppressed, especially in cases suggesting institutional failure or possible criminality. The order came in response to a petition by YouTube channel Kudle Rampage, one of 338 entities barred from reporting on the case. The court held that the ex-parte injunction had a chilling effect on journalism and public accountability. —*PTI*

>>>More on Page 2

Lookout notice issued against Anil Ambani

NEW DELHI, 1 AUG

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has issued a lookout circular against Reliance Group Chairman Anil Ambani in connection with an alleged 3,000-crore loan fraud case, sources said on Friday. The notice aims to prevent him from leaving the country. Ambani has been summoned by the ED for questioning on Tuesday. A lookout circular alerts authorities to detain individuals attempting to evade investigation. The ED has been investigating the alleged diversion of around Rs 3,000 crore in loans given to Reliance Group companies by Yes Bank between 2017 and 2019. —*PTI*

>>>More on Page 7

RaGa to 'bomb' EC with voter theft proof

NEW DELHI, 1 AUG

Rahul Gandhi **PHOTO: PTI**

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Friday accused the Election Commission (EC) of aiding the BJP in "vote chori" and claimed his party has an "atom bomb" of evidence that will expose the alleged electoral manipulation.

Speaking ahead of a planned protest in Bengaluru on 5 August, Gandhi alleged that voter theft had occurred in multiple states, including Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Karnataka. "What we have found is an atom bomb. When it explodes, the EC will have no place to hide in the country," he said, warning those involved — "from top to bottom" — that they would be held accountable, even in retirement. "This is treason," he added.

The EC dismissed Gandhi's remarks as "baseless" and urged its officials to ignore such "irresponsible" statements.

Gandhi cited the example of Mahadevpura in Karnataka, where the Congress reportedly digitised a paper-based voter list and investigated patterns of manipulation, including sudden deletions of genuine voters and suspicious new additions. The probe took six months.

His remarks came on the day the EC released the draft electoral rolls for Bihar following a month-long Special Intensive Revision (SIR) exercise. Opposition parties have raised strong objections to the SIR, alleging it is being used to disenfranchise voters ahead of the Bihar Assembly polls.

Congress, backed by other opposition parties, has urged Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla to schedule a discussion on the issue. Congress has also announced a massive protest in Bengaluru to "expose the outrageous rigging" of voter rolls in Karnataka.

65 lakh voters deleted in Bihar

Election Commission on Friday came out with the much-anticipated 'draft electoral rolls' in Bihar, enlisting 7.24 crore voters but knocking off more than 65 lakh names, claiming that most of the persons concerned had died or migrated. The draft electoral rolls, prepared as part of the special intensive revision (SIR), which has caused much controversy as the exercise was ordered with just a few months left for polls, are available for voters online. —*PTI*

VP polls on 9 Sept; keen contest likely on cards

NEW DELHI, 1 AUG

The 17th Vice Presidential election will be held on 9 September, the Election Commission announced on Friday. The notification will be issued on 7 August and the last date for filing nominations is 21 August. Polling, if needed, will be conducted in Parliament House between 10 am and 5 pm, with results declared the same day.

The election follows the surprise resignation of Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar on 21 July—marking the first time an incumbent quit mid-term without contesting for higher office. Previously, V V Giri (1969) and R Venkataraman (1987) resigned mid-term to contest the presidential election.

A close contest is expected, with the Congress-led Opposition likely to field a joint candidate, while the BJP-led NDA—backed by numbers—prepares to nominate someone with strong organisational credentials.

The Electoral College comprises 543 Lok Sabha MPs (one seat vacant) and 245 Rajya Sabha MPs (five vacancies), including 12 nominated members, totalling 782 electors. A candidate needs 391 votes to win. The NDA holds a comfortable majority with support from 293 Lok Sabha MPs and 129 Rajya Sabha members, including nominated MPs — totalling 422. —*PTI*

ARSON, STONE PELTING, CLASHES IN PUNE OVER WHATSAPP POST

PUNE, 1 AUG

Tension gripped Yavat village in Pune's Daund tehsil on Friday after a mob went on a rampage over an objectionable WhatsApp post allegedly uploaded by a youth from another community.

According to police, the mob vandalised properties, damaged a bakery, and set a motorcycle on fire. Teargas shells had to be used to control the situation. A heavy police presence remains in the area, and peace has since been restored. Pune Rural Superintendent of Police Sandip Singh Gill said the youth responsible for the post—who hails from outside the village—was detained promptly. "The post went viral, fuelling unrest in a village already tense from earlier incidents," Gill said, adding that structures belonging to members of the other community were targeted. An official noted that locals from both communities concerns about "non-native" outsiders stoking tensions. —*PTI*

'THE KERALA STORY' AWARDED

National Award: SRK, Massey win best actors

NEW DELHI, 1 AUG

Hindi cinema led the honours at the 71st National Film Awards, with Shah Rukh Khan and Vikrant Massey jointly winning Best Actor for 'Jawan' and '12th Fail', respectively. Massey's film also won Best Feature Film.

Rani Mukerji took home her first National Award as Best Actress for 'Mrs Chatterjee vs Norway'. Filmmaker Ashutosh Gowariker, heading the jury, praised Khan's dual role in Jawan as a "powerhouse performance". The film, directed by Atlee, grossed over Rs 1,100 crore globally.

Karan Johar's 'Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahaani' won Best Popular Film, with Vaibhavi Merchant winning Best Choreography for Dhindhora Baaje. Shilpa Rao was awarded Best Female Playback Singer for 'Chaleya' from Jawan.

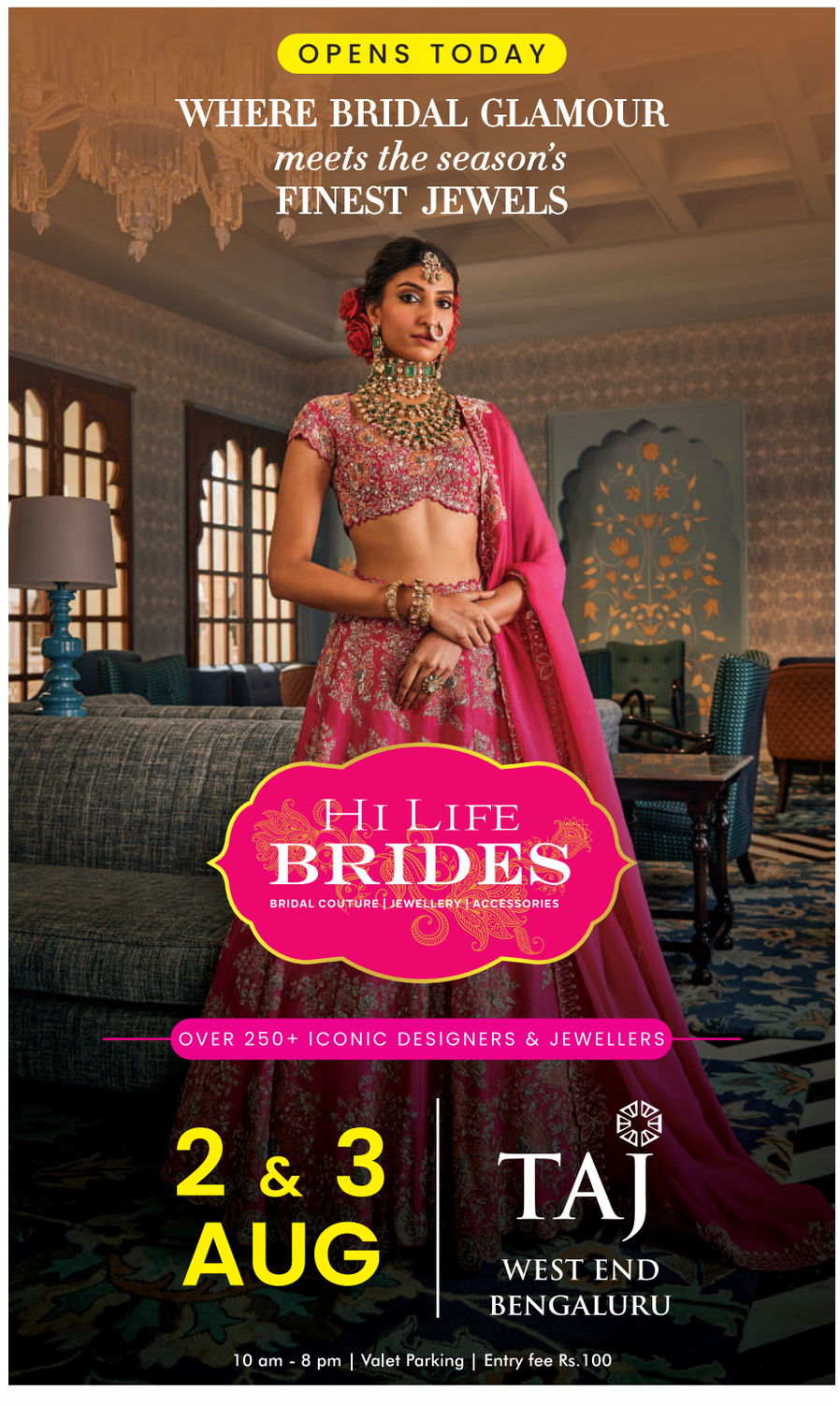
'Sam Bahadur', Meghna Gulzar's biopic on Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw, won for Best Film on Social Values, Make-up, and Costume. Sudipto Sen was named Best Director for 'The Kerala Story', which also won Best Cinematography.

Vikrant Massey's '12th fail' won Best Feature Film

Other winners include 'Kathal' as Best Hindi Film and Hanu-Man (Telugu) for Best AVGC and Action Direction. Animal won for Sound Design, Background Score, and a Special Mention.

Supporting actor awards went to Vijayaraghavan ('Pookalam') and Muthupettai Somu Bhaskar ('Parking'); Urvashi ('Ullozhokku') and Janki Bodiwala ('Vash') shared Best Supporting Actress.

Regional winners included 'Rongatapu' 1982 (Assamese), 'Shamchi Aai' (Marathi), and 'Bhagavanth Kesari' (Telugu). In non-feature categories, 'Flowering Man' was Best Film, and 'God Vulture' and Human won Best Documentary. —*PTI*



CCB seizes 123kg of ganja; 3 arrested in Dakshina Kannada

MANGALURU, 1 AUG

A large cache of ganja weighing 123kg was seized by the Mangaluru City Crime Branch in a major crackdown on narcotics smuggling, with three individuals arrested for allegedly transporting the contraband from Andhra Pradesh. Acting on a tip-off, CCB officials intercepted two cars near Mathadakere in Kantavar Cross, located in Beluvai village of Moodbidri taluk, Dakshina Kannada district, on Thursday. The contraband was reportedly being smuggled across State borders, they said. The arrested individuals - Masood MK, 45, Mohammed Ashiq, 24, and Subair, 30 - are all residents of Kasaragod district in Kerala, officials added. In addition to the cannabis, officials also seized two vehicles and five mobile phones. —*PTI*

PHOTO: SALAR

Kalaburagi varsity staff booked over question paper leak

KALABURAGI, 1 AUG

The police have registered a case against a staff member Gulbarga University in Kalaburagi for leaking question papers two hours ahead of the BA, B.Com and BBM examinations on 29 July. Janata Parivar Sangathan President Sirajuddin Shabdi had filed a complaint about the incident at the Brahmapur Police Station registered. A case was registered against an anonymous staff member of the university. Shabdi said that he discovered about the leak from an external source and immediately contacted the police. The police confirmed the leaked question paper matched the one distributed to students during the examination. —*Salar News*

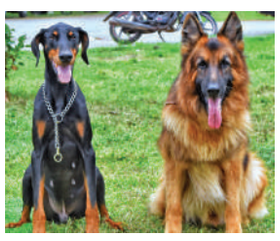


PHOTO: SALAR

2 KGF police dogs retire after 9yrs of service

KOLAR, 1 AUG

Two police dogs, Rakhi and Birla, who served the KGF police for over nine years, were given a ceremonial farewell on July 31 as they retired from service. The dogs, instrumental in solving several criminal cases including murder investigations, were retired following the expiry of their insurance term and upon reaching the age of eight, as per departmental policy. At the farewell event, KGF Superintendent of Police Shivamshu Rajput presented service certificates to the dogs. They were officially handed over to their handlers, Assistant Head Constables G. Nagaraj and N. Rajesh from the District Armed Reserve unit, who will care for them post-retirement. —*Salar News*

Belagavi Christians hold silent protest over nuns' arrest

BELAGAVI, 1 AUG

Hundreds of Christians gathered in Belagavi of the State on Friday evening for a silent march demanding the immediate release of two Kerala-based Catholic nuns and a tribal youth, recently detained in Chhattisgarh under controversial circumstances. Led by Bishop Rev. Dr. Derek Fernandes, around 400 participants, including priests, nuns, and laypersons, assembled at the DC Compound at 4.40pm The march ended at the Zilla Panchayat CEO office, where a memorandum was submitted to Deputy Commissioner Mohammed Roshan, addressed to India's President, PM, and State's CM. —*Salar News*

HC lifts media gag on D'sthala case

Terms lower court order as an unconstitutional restraint on free speech

BENGALURU, 1 AUG

Security personnel keep vigil during an examination by the Special Investigation Team in connection with the Dharmasthala mass burial case **PHOTO: PTI**

The High Court on Friday struck down a media gag order imposed by a lower court in the Dharmasthala mass burial case, calling it an Unconstitutional restraint on free speech.

A single judge bench of Justice M Nagaprasanna said that the trial court did not mention any alleged defamatory content when passing its order, calling the gag order a "sweeping injunction". The ruling further stated that the order was so broad that it "threatens" any voice against the respondent-plaintiff, the family or even Dharmasthala.

The plaintiff, Harshendra Kumar D. is the brother of Dharmasthala pattadhikari D. Veerendra Heggade.

The High Court's order came in response to a petition filed by the YouTube channel Kudle Rampage, which was one of 338 respondents barred from publishing any content related to the case.

Justice Nagaprasanna said that the trial court's order could create a "chilling effect" on journalism and public accountability.

Advocate A Velan, who represented the petitioners called the ruling a "powerful affirmation that the courts will not permit the law to be used as a shield against public accountability."

The case emerged after an anonymous former sanitation worker claimed that he was forced to bury several bodies, including those of women and minors, in Dharmasthala, between 1995 and 2014.

SIT CHIEF TRANSFER

Pronab Mohanty, SIT Chief heading the probe met Home Minister G Parameshwara on Friday at the latter's residence, amid speculation that he may be replaced after his name appeared on the list of Director General-rank officers being considered for positions in the Union government.

"He will not be immediately given any posting (at Centre). He had come to inform me about it. Also, as the government is bringing rules regarding fake news, online gambling -- Mohanty being the Internal Security Division head, had come to brief me about certain things ahead of the meeting in this regard today," Parameshwara said.

The Minister noted that the decision to relieve Mohanty of his State duties for a Central government position rests with the Karnataka government, which would respond to any official request from the Centre.

"No such communication has come from the Centre yet." —*Agencies*

> **We are watching (social media) and if in any way (posts) are instigating feelings in the society, we will try to stop (it). We are taking action against hate speech-related cases, as you are aware. We will keep watch on such postings that may create an impact (on the society) wrongly**
>
> —G Parameshwa, Home Minister

SIT BEGINS EXCAVATION AT SEVENTH SITE

DHARMASTHALA, 1 AUG

The Special Investigation Team on Friday excavated the seventh identified location in the temple town of Dharmasthala, as part of its ongoing probe into allegations of mass burials, police said. However, no skeletal remains were found at the site.

This development comes a day after skeletal remains were recovered during digging at the adjacent site, identified as Point No 6, on Thursday.

A total of 15 locations have been identified for excavation, based on a complaint submitted anonymously by a former sanitation worker.

Forensic experts in Mangaluru noted that to establish the cause of death or confirm whether the burials were carried out with malicious intent, a complete or near-complete human skeleton would be required. Isolated bones or partial remains may not offer sufficient evidence to draw legal conclusions, they added.

Officials from the Dharmasthala Grama Panchayat clarified that over 200 unclaimed or unidentified bodies have been buried in various parts of the village since 1995. In the absence of a formal burial ground, such burials were common. —*PTI*

Fadnavis said the changes could cause flooding in in Sangli and Kolhapur regions in south Maharashtra **PHOTO: PTI**

Fadnavis opposes Almatti height raise

BELAGAVI, 1 AUG

Listing the adverse effects in the catchment area of river Krishna in Maharashtra if Karnataka increased the height of Almatti reservoir, Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis has written a letter to Union Jalshakti (Irrigation) minister CR Patil.

Fadnavis stated that Karnataka's plan to raise the height of the Almatti reservoir in Vijaypura district to 524m from 519.6m is a matter of concern for Maharashtra.

"I sincerely request you to instruct the Government of Karnataka to reconsider the plan of raising the Full Reservoir Level (FRL) of Almatti Dam," his letter said. "Raising the FRL of Almatti dam will result in 6m of standing pool water in the Krishna River."

Fadnavis said the changes could cause flooding in in Sangli and Kolhapur regions in south Maharashtra. He said it "would affect thousands of residents and agricultural lands". He added that silt would get stored in the catchment area of the river Krishna which could causes the river to change its route.

"The impounding of Almatti Dam has led to extensive siltation upstream in the Krishna River and its tributaries. This has adversely affected the river system's carrying capacity, causing delays in the recession of floodwaters in Sangli and Kolhapur."

—*Salar News with Agencies*

Centre must act quickly on tariffs: Priyank

BENGALURU, 1 AUG

State IT Minister Priyank Kharge has voiced concern over the US's 25 per cent tariff on Indian exports, warning it could harm the state's electronics sector. He told PTI, "This requires a lot more deep dive because it has been 24 hours since the US announced these tariffs. But I think the Government of India seriously needs to look at it."

Kharge pointed out India's competitive challenges against nations like Vietnam, noting, "If you look at the countries we compete with globally, it's Vietnam, China, Indonesia. We are the highest in Asia... Vietnam is at 20 per cent."

He criticised the central government's handling of trade issues, saying, "A massive miscalculation of policies by the central government." Kharge also questioned the US-India relationship, stating, "In fact, it has become quite devastating for smaller manufacturers."

When asked about whether State is in touch with electronic manufacturing firms, Kharge said, "We have spoken to a few people. And of course, they're also uncertain." He called for ecosystem protection, adding, "We should see this ecosystem as a whole, not just about Apple or Foxconn. We manufacture across sectors — smartphones, semiconductors, space tech — and need a holistic approach." —*PTI*

'Trump very volatile, uncivil, irresponsible'

NEW DELHI, 1 AUG

Former prime minister HD Deve Gowda on Friday launched a scathing attack on US President Donald Trump over his remarks on India, calling him the most "volatile, uncivil and irresponsible" head of state in modern history.

In a statement, the JD(S) leader said he was "surprised" by Trump's "baseless and ill-tempered remarks" on India and the Indian economy, and accused the US President of behaving badly not just with India but with every other country across the world. He has not spared his own longstanding allies," Deve Gowda said.

He suggested there was "something fundamentally wrong" with Trump that "reason, diplomacy or statecraft" could not address.

He said, "I am very happy and proud that India, under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has not compromised our national interest. It has not blinked to Mr Trump's bullying and has shown that it will never be dictated by threat." —*PTI*

Metro's Yellow Line receives safety nod

BENGALURU, 1 AUG

The Namma Metro Yellow Line has received statutory safety clearance. It is now expected to be launched in the second week of August.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is expected to inaugurate the 19.15km line, connecting RV Road to Bommasandara via Silk Board and Electronic City. However, official confirmation is yet to be released, and the inauguration date is reportedly contingent on his availability.

"Today, the progress of the airport metro route was reviewed by the Managing Director of BMRCL," a statement said.

The clearance was reportedly given by AM Chowdhary, Commissioner of Railway Safety. —*Agencies*

Kolar villagers turn garbage dump into temple tank

KOLAR, 1 AUG

With a little bit of help and no government intervention, villagers turned a garbage pit into a kalyani, in Mallappanahalli in Kolar.

The idea of turning a place where villagers had been throwing garbage for years into a Yellamma and Madduramma temple tank came from a group youth. Noting the stink and that water had been collecting and breeding mosquitos, they approached Ramesh Krishnappa, Founder President of Vrushabadri Foundation, an NGO working in the field of environment, and sought his help.

Although rains slowed the progress, the work pushed on for nearly two and a half months **PHOTO: SALAR**

Krishnappa got in touch with the Rotary Club of Basavanagudi and made a blueprint to restore the area, consulting with field experts and local villagers. Vijayaraj, President of the Rotary club also joined the exercise.

Villagers agreed that transforming the dump into a kalyan was a good idea and said that they would contribute to the project as well. Initially, it was estimated that the work would cost around 12 lakhs rupees, but ended up costing 20 lakh rupees.

Nearly 15 truckloads of waste were removed, followed by excavation to create a 55x45 ft pond, 40 ft deep, with steps for easy access.

Although rains slowed the progress, the work pushed on for nearly two and a half months. —*Salar News*

NURSING STUDENTS PROTEST AFTER WARDEN ASSAULTS CLASSMATE

KALABURAGI, 1 AUG

Alleging that a hostel warden allegedly assaulted a female student, students at the Smt. Indira Gandhi Women's Nursing Hostel in Kalaburagi stage a dharna late into the night on Thursday.

The hostel, run by the Department of Backward Classes Welfare, witnessed tense scenes as several students refused dinner and held a dharna in front of the premises on High Court Ring Road.

According to one student, Devamma, the incident occurred when students were raising concerns about the quality of food being served. The warden, Archana, then slapped and physically assaulted a student.

"We have come from distant places and is it wrong to question the facilities being provided to us by the government?" she said.

Bhagyashree, added, "There are worms in the food, especially in the side dishes. They serve us such food regularly. The water tank has not been cleaned for over three months. If we question them, the warden intimidates us'"

The students demanded immediate action and removal of Archana. —*Salar News*

School boy murder: Two held after firing at cops

BEGALURU, 1 AUG

Two people were arrested in connection with the kidnapping and murder of a school boy, following an exchange of fire with the police near here on Friday.

Gurumurthy, 27 and Gopalakrishna, 25 were shot in the legs after they allegedly tried to resist the arrest and attacked the police team with sharp weapons near Bilvaradahalli road.

The accused and two injured policemen were being treated at a hospital.

The accused had already demanded a ransom of Rs 5 lakh from 13-year-old Nishcith's parents before allegedly slitting his throat and setting him on fire.

Nishcith's father, a private college professor, filed a complaint with the police, alleging that their son had left home for tuition on his bicycle, but did not return.

The bicycle was found parked near a public park in Arekere.

The boy's burnt body was found on the outskirts of the city, off Bannerghatta Road on 31 July.

The accused, working as drivers, were known to the boy's father.

Further investigation is underway. —*PTI*

GRAFT IN RIDL

Ex-clerk with ₹15K pay owns ₹30 cr assets

NEW DELHI/ BENGALURU 1 AUG

PHOTO: PTI

The Lokayukta has exposed how a corrupt government employee, even in a very low rank in the administration, could amass wealth.

Kalakappa Nidagundi, who worked as a clerk at the Rural Infrastructure Development Limited in Koppal, is now the owner of 24 houses, around 40 acres of land, and unaccounted assets worth Rs 30 crore. He had a monthly salary of only Rs 15,000.

The big fraud was exposed after a raid by the Karnataka Lokayukta officials as part of its crackdown on potential misuse of official positions, and amassing wealth more than the declared sources of income.

ED RAIDS 10 PREMISES

Meanwhile in another development, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Friday conducted searches at 10 premises connected to a builder group and its key management personnel at Bengaluru and Mumbai, officials said.

The searches are still underway. ED's Bangaluru zonal office is conducting the search under Section 17 of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

The searches are being conducted on money laundering allegations against the company in its project in Devanahalli Taluk in Bengaluru, the officials said. —*Agencies*

TN MP urges govt to rescue student from Russian army

CHENNAI, 1 AUG

MDMK MP Durai Vaiko has called on the Centre to intervene and save Kishore Saravanan, a third-year medical student from Cuddalore, Tamil Nadu, allegedly forcibly conscripted into the Russian military. The student's parents claim he was detained over a drug case but was subjected to physical and psychological abuse, with reports indicating he is now undergoing military training against his will. "Kishore is currently being forced to sign documents and is expected to be sent to the warfront within days," said Vaiko. His parents, Saravanan and Bhama, appealed for urgent help, saying, "We sold our land to fund his studies. Now, he is imprisoned. We urge both governments to rescue him immediately." —*PTI*

CISF guards stop Oppn's SIR protest in RS

Rijiju says government will not yield to Opposition's demand for a discussion on SIR

Leaders of the INDIA bloc parties stage a protest against the Election Commission's Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls in Bihar, during the Monsoon session of Parliament, in New Delhi, on Friday *PHOTO: PTI*

NEW DELHI, 1 AUG

Rajya Sabha on Friday, prompting sharp protests from Opposition leaders.

The deployment followed persistent Opposition protests against the Summary Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in Bihar, which disrupted proceedings in both Houses of Parliament.

The Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha were adjourned for the day after Opposition MPs raised slogans and attempted to storm the well of the House.

Leader of Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge, in a letter to Deputy Chairman Harivansh, expressed deep concern, calling the presence of CISF personnel in the well "shocking" and "objectionable". Writing on behalf of Opposition parties, Kharge stated: "We are astonished and shocked at the manner in which CISF personnel were made to run into the well of the House when members are exercising their democratic rights of protest."

He further demanded that such incidents not be repeated: "We expect that in future, CISF personnel will not come trooping into the well when members are raising important public issues."

The Opposition alleged a "paramilitary takeover" of Parliament, accusing the government of suppressing dissent. Some MPs were blocked by marshals as they tried to enter the well, triggering further outrage.

Responding to Kharge's objections, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju defended the action, stating that marshals were deployed after some MPs moved aggressively to disrupt proceedings. He said it is the prerogative of the Chair, not the government, to take necessary measures.

Rijiju added that the SIR is within the EC's mandate, and whether Parliament can discuss its administrative functioning is for Chair to decide.

The EC, he noted, is a constitutionally autonomous body, and discussions must adhere to established rules and conventions.

Opposition accuse the EC of acting under the government influence to remove voters sympathetic to them.

Criticising the Opposition over disruption of Parliament, Rijiju said it is not allowing other members to raise their issues and then claims that it is being stopped from speak. —*PTI*

NIPAH VIRUS:
Three cases have been reported in Malappuram & Palakkad district in Kerala in 2025 AND 677 contacts have been traced, said Minister of State for Health Prataprao Jadhav.

MGNREGA DUES:
The Centre owes West Bengal over RS 3,000 CRORE, the highest among states, under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act claiming funds transfer was stopped due to non-compliance of directives.

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

T'gana Guv sends 42% BC quota Ordinance to Prez

HYDERABAD, 1 AUG

Telangana Governor Jishnu Dev Varma is understood to have sent an ordinance, aimed at facilitating 42 per cent reservation to backward classes in local body polls, to the President, official sources said on Friday. They said the Governor has sent the the Panchayat Raj (Amendment) ordinance for Presidential assent. The Congress government had issued the ordinance in July, amending the Panchayat Raj Act as Section 285A of the Act capping total reservations for SCs, STs and BCs in local bodies at 50 per cent. The Governor sending the ordinance to the President assumes significance as the High Court had directed the state government and the State Election Commission to conduct elections to the Gram Panchayats and declare results by 30 September. —*PTI*

SC extends stay in Tharoor's defamation case

NEW DELHI, 1 AUG

The Supreme Court has extended the stay on proceedings against Congress MP Shashi Tharoor in a defamation case over his "scorpion on Shivling" remark targeting Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The bench, comprising Justices MM Sundresh and N Kotiswar Singh, questioned the complainant's lawyer, asking, "Why be so touchy?" The court postponed the hearing until 15 September. Tharoor's lawyer argued the comment was protected under the immunity clause for statements made in "good faith". The Delhi High Court had previously refused to quash the case, calling the remark "despicable and deplorable," and saying it defamed the Prime Minister and BJP members. —*PTI*

Don't know why OPS quit NDA, says TN BJP Chief

MADURAI, 1 AUG

BJP Tamil Nadu Chief Nainar Nagenthiran on Friday claimed he wasn't aware of the exact reason why former chief minister of Tamil Nadu O Panneerselvam walked out of the NDA alliance. Playing down Panneerselvam's 31 July announcement on severing ties with the BJP-led alliance, Nagenthiran said it was not clear why he had made such a decision. If it had anything to do with not being able to meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi, then he was willing to arrange the meeting. "Had Panneerselvam requested me, I would have arranged the meeting," Nagendran told reporters here. He denied that Panneerselvam walked out of the alliance due to pressure exerted by AIADMK general secretary Edappadi K Palaniswami on the BJP. —*PTI*

7.24 CRORE VOTERS ENLISTED

EC drops 65 lakh voters as it publishes draft Bihar SIR list

PATNA, 1 AUG

The Election Commission on Friday came out with the much-anticipated 'draft electoral rolls' in Bihar, enlisting 7.24 crore voters but knocking off more than 65 lakh names, claiming that most of the persons concerned had died or migrated.

The draft electoral rolls, prepared as part of the special intensive revision (SIR), which has caused much controversy as the exercise was ordered with just a few months left for assembly polls, are available for voters online.

EC has also said it was making available printed copies, district wise, to representatives of political parties so that anomalies, if any, could be flagged during the 'claims and objections' phase, before the 'final rolls' are published.

However, RJD, was unhappy with the system and in a memorandum, submitted to the Chief Electoral Officer of Bihar, it demanded an 'assembly segment-wise' break-up conveniently downloaded "in a pen drive or on a CD".

Congress, which is the second-largest constituent of the INDIA bloc in the state, also challenged the EC to disclose "how many foreign nationals" were found to have been included in the voters' list prior to SIR and whether they have been dropped in the 'draft electoral rolls'.

Notably, the BJP-led NDA has been alleging that "a large number of Bangladeshis & Rohingyas" were living in Bihar.

Leaders of the ruling coalition have also been claiming that many such "illegal immigrants" had been registered as voters and the deletion of their names was being opposed by the INDIA bloc because of "vote bank" concerns. —*PTI*

Voters show the enumeration forms given by a Booth Level Officer during the special intensive revision of electoral rolls in Bihar *PHOTO:PTI*

Indian refineries stop buying Russian oil: Report

NEW DELHI, 1 AUG

India, the world's third-largest oil importer and the top buyer of seaborne Russian crude, has paused purchases from Russia by its state-run refiners, according to a Reuters report. Indian Oil Corporation, Bharat Petroleum, Hindustan Petroleum, and Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals have reportedly not bought Russian crude in over a week, it said.

This comes after US President Donald Trump hit India with 25 per cent tariffs, with added penalties for buying Russian oils.

Although no official announcement has been made by the companies or the Indian government, the halt marks a significant shift in one of Moscow's most crucial energy partnerships since the war in Ukraine began in 2022, sources said.

According to sources, the development follows a sharp decline in the discounts offered on Russian crude, making it less economically attractive for Indian buyers.

India is instead sourcing oil from alternative sources, including Middle Eastern oil such as Abu Dhabi's Murban and West African oil, to meet the supply deficit.

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Moscow's oil prices have been steadily dropping, as Russian President Vladimir Putin has long been relying on it to fuel his full-scale invasion against Ukraine.

Trump recently warned of 100 per cent tariffs on countries purchasing Russian oil unless Russia agrees to a comprehensive peace deal.

On Monday, Trump cut the deadline to impose the secondary sanctions on buyers of Russian exports to 10-12 days from the previous 50-day period, if Moscow does not agree to a peace deal with Ukraine. —*Agencies*

M'rashtra minister removed from agri after rummy row

MUMBAI, 1 AUG

Maharashtra Minister and NCP MLA Manikrao Kokate has been shifted from the agriculture ministry to the sports and youth welfare department in a late-night cabinet reshuffle.

Dattatrey Bharne, the current sports minister, will be the new agriculture minister, said a notification issued by the General Administration Department (GAD) on Thursday night.

Kokate will also be in charge of the minority development and Auqaf departments, it said.

Both Kokate and Bharne are MLAs of the Ajit Pawar-led NCP. Bharne is MLA from Indapur in Pune district.

Kokate, a legislator from Sinnar in Nashik district, found himself in hot water after a video of him playing an online rummy game on his mobile phone while sitting in the legislative council during the monsoon session was shared on social media by NCP (SP) leaders Rohit Pawar and Jitendra Awhad.

He also courted controversy for allegedly equating farmers with beggars a few months ago. —*PTI*

After Hindi, RSS Chief pushes for Sanskrit

NAGPUR, 1 AUG

RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat on Friday called Sanskrit the "mother of all Indian languages" and urged that it become a medium of daily communication across households in India.

Speaking at the inauguration of a new academic building at Kavi Kulguru Kalidas Sanskrit University in Nagpur, he said that Sanskrit should not remain confined to academic understanding but be spoken widely.

Bhagwat said the language enriches emotional expression ("bhav") and connects deeply with India's cultural identity. He admitted he had learnt Sanskrit but still found fluent conversation challenging—highlighting the need for greater practice and public participation. He emphasised that both government support & community involvement are essential for the language's revival. Linking Sanskrit with self-reliance (atmanirbharta) and inner strength (swabal), Bhagwat stated that true national identity (swatwa) is conveyed through one's language.

Contrasting India's ideal of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam (the world is one family) with West's focus on global markets, he said Sanskrit embodies India's civilisational ethos. Maharashtra CM Devendra Fadnavis also pledged full state support. —*PTI*

Nuns' arrest was 'misunderstanding': BJP

THRISSUR/RAIPUR/ NEW DELHI, 1 AUG

BJP state chief Rajeev Chandrasekhar on Friday said the arrest of two nuns in Chhattisgarh over allegations of human trafficking and forced conversion was due to a "misunderstanding" and that they will be released on bail soon.

Chandrasekhar made the statement after meeting with Archbishop of Trichur Andrews Thazhath, the president of the Catholic Bishops Conference of India (CBCI), to brief him that the Prime Minister and Union Home Minister have assured the nuns would be released on bail.

The BJP state president said that both the PM and HM assured him that the state government will not oppose the bail pleas of the nuns.

> An injustice has been done, & people are bringing this to the fore, but still they are in jail. I met two BJP ministers, and they said they will look into it, but nothing has been done
>
> -Shashi Tharoor, Congress MP

Two Kerala-based Catholic nuns, Preethi Merry and Vandana Francis, along with social worker Sukaman Mandavi, were detained at Durg railway station on 25 July, following allegations of human trafficking and forced religious conversion. The complaint, filed by a Bajrang Dal member, accused them of proselytising three girls from Narayanpur district.

Additionally, a delegation of the All India Congress Committee (AICC) from Kerala arrived in Raipur to meet two nuns.

Members of the delegation alleged that referring the case to the National Investigation Agency (NIA) court by the Durg sessions court is a conspiracy to ensure that the arrested nuns don't get bail immediately.

Meanwhile, Chattisgarh Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai said the "law is doing its job" when asked about the arrest of two Catholic nuns for alleged human trafficking and forced religious conversion in the state.

Additonally, a special NIA court in Chhattisgarh's Bilaspur district reserved its order on a bail application filed by three persons including two nuns from Kerala. —*PTI*

FLAYS PARTY BACKED MEDIA

Revanth feels like 'slapping' arrogant senior journalists

HYDERABAD, 1 AUG

Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy on Friday criticised political parties for launching media outlets to serve their own interests, saying it "hurts journalism".

He also slammed those journalists who display "arrogance," saying he feels like "slapping them."

Speaking at the 10th anniversary celebrations of Telugu daily 'Nava Telangana', he recalled that political parties in the past founded newspapers to disseminate their ideology among people.

"But today, strange tendencies can be seen. Some parties start political party-owned media to cover up their irregularities, protect their wealth and tarnish the image of those questioning them..." he said.

Reddy remarked that political leaders can easily discern whether a reporter at a press conference is a genuine journalist or a political activist masquerading as one.

He advised journalists to differentiate themselves from media persons affiliated to political parties.

"Today, somebody who does not know alphabet says I am a journalist. If we ask him, he says I am a social media journalist. He identifies himself as a journalist as if it is his surname," he said.

Reddy also said he may sometimes use disrespectful language against political opponents. He, however, claimed that this is a response to his rivals who use similar language. The current media landscape is so complicated that it has become necessary for sincere journalists to conduct seminars and define who a journalist is.

"Those who do not follow basic courtesies like respecting seniors sit in the front rows when we conduct press conferences. Some of them show so much arrogance. Sometimes, I feel like slapping them. But, stature and circumstances prevent from doing so," he said. —*PTI*

Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy *PHOTO: PTI*

TDP minister's cousin slaps police constable at Andhra temple, arrested

NANDYAL, 1 AUG

The cousin of TDP Minister BC Janardhan Reddy, Bobbala Madana Bhupal Reddy, slapped a police constable during a temple inauguration in Andhra Pradesh's Nandyal district, said sources.

A video of the incident at the Sri Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy temple in Kolimigundla mandal has gone viral.

Constable Jaswanth Kumar, posted at the event, stopped Reddy's cousin from entering a restricted area. Allegedly, Reddy's relative then abused and slapped the officer publicly. The police registered a case under IPC Sections 132, 121(1), 126(2), and 351(2) for obstructing and assaulting a public servant. He was arrested on Friday morning, it said.

Sources stated that the TDP Minister BC Janardhan Reddy condemned the incident, stating, "I condemn the assault on the AR constable. As soon as I came to know about the incident, I instructed police officials to register a case and take action. There is no place for such behaviour in public life. Those in public life should act responsibly."

In a viral video Bobbala Madana Bhupal Reddy is seen slapping the cop *PHOTO: SCREENGRAB*

- The YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) criticised the event, calling it a sign of increasing impunity among those close to power

The YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) criticised the event, calling it a sign of increasing impunity among those close to power. "This shameful act reflects the growing impunity enjoyed by those close to power, where even law enforcement officers are not spared. The silence of the government raises serious concerns about rule of law in Andhra Pradesh." YSRCP wrote on X. —*Agencies*

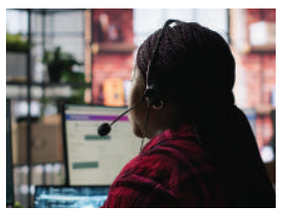


PHOTO: PTI

ED raids fake call centres duping US citizens

NEW DELHI, 1 AUG

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has conducted searches in Delhi as part of a money laundering investigation into a "fake" call centre allegedly duping US citizens by selling "pirated" software. Three premises in Khanpur were raided around 10.30pm on Thursday, with searches ongoing, officials said. The operation is under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA). Preliminary investigations indicate that the call centre, operated by unidentified individuals, misled citizens in countries like the US by promoting "fictitious or pirated" software falsely claiming to be genuine, such as Microsoft Windows. Authorities suspect that approximately Rs 100 crore has been received in foreign remittances over the past years, from 2016-17 to 2024-25. *—PTI*

Doctors' protest disrupts services in AIIMS-Patna

PATNA, 1 AUG

Healthcare services at AIIMS-Patna were disrupted on Friday as resident doctors boycotted work in protest against Sheohar JD(U) MLA Chetan Anand's alleged high-handedness. The Resident Doctors' Association wrote to the medical superintendent demanding legal action against Anand and the deployment of security. The RDA accused Anand, his wife, and armed guards of forcibly entering the hospital, assaulting security staff, threatening doctors with death, and brandishing a firearm, injuring a guard in the process. Anand claimed staff misbehaved with him and his wife during a visit on Wednesday night, resulting in injuries to his wife and him being held hostage. An FIR was registered and police are investigating the incident. *—PTI*

Sanjay Vatsayan appointed as Vice Chief of Naval Staff

NEW DELHI, 1 AUG

Vice Admiral Sanjay Vatsayan has been appointed as the 47th Vice Chief of the Naval Staff, taking charge on 1 August. A specialist in gunnery and missile systems, he boasts of a career spanning over three decades, including roles at HQ IDS, Naval HQ, and commanding various frontline ships like INS Mysore and INS Sahyadri. He served as the Flag Officer Commanding Eastern Fleet, leading key operations post-Galwan. A graduate of NDA, Wellington, and the Naval War College, Goa, he succeeded Vice Admiral Krishna Swaminathan. Vice Admiral Swaminathan now commands the Western Naval Command. Vice Admiral Nair also took charge as Controller Personnel Services. *—PTI*

4 dead in rain related incidents in UP, J'khand

BHADOHI/DUMKA, 1 AUG

In Uttar Pradesh's Bhadohi district, a mud house collapsed due to ongoing heavy rainfall, killing 75-year-old Ranjana Devi and seriously injuring her daughter-in-law, Sarita Devi. The incident occurred in Gopipur village when a mud wall and tin roof gave way, burying both women. Ranjana Devi was declared dead at hospital, while Sarita remains critically ill. In Jharkhand's Dumka, a 10-year-old boy named Aman Kumar was killed and his sister Masum Kumari injured after their house in Bamankheta collapsed during heavy rains. In West Bengal, heavy rainfall was forecast across the sub-Himalayan districts, including Jalpaiguri and Darjeeling. Kolkata experienced spells of rain, with wet weather expected until Saturday morning. *—PTI*

Ex-cop 'asked' to arrest RSS Chief in Malegaon blast

Acquittal undid fake ATS investigation, says ex-ATS official

PUNE, 1 AUGUST

A former police official who was part of the Maharashtra Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) that probed the 2008 Malegaon blast case has claimed that he had been asked to apprehend RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat.

The objective behind the order was to establish that there was "saffron terror", retired inspector Mehiboob Mujawar alleged on Thursday, reacting to the trial court's verdict acquitting all seven accused, including former BJP MP Pragya Singh Thakur.

The court's ruling undid the "fake things" done by the ATS, he said, speaking at Solapur.

While the ATS initially probed the case, it was later taken over by the National Investigation Agency.

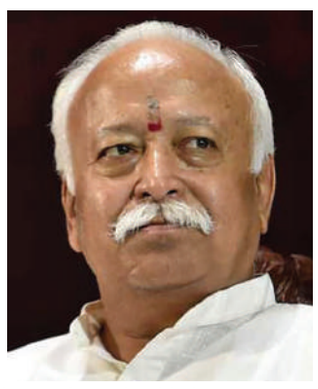
"The verdict exposed the fake investigation done by a fake officer," Mujawar further said, naming a senior official.

He was part of the ATS team that probed the blast at Malegaon on 29 September, 2008, which killed six people and injured 101 others, Mujawar said, claiming that he was asked to "go and catch" Mohan Bhagwat.

"I cannot say what investigation the ATS did then and why...But I was given some confidential orders regarding personalities like Ram Kalsangra, Sandip Dange, Dilip Patidar and RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat. All these orders were not such that one could follow them," he said.

He, in fact, did not follow them as they were "horrific" and he knew the reality, Mujawar added.

"It was beyond my capacity to apprehend a towering personality like Mohan Bhagwat. As I did not follow the orders, a false case was registered against me and it destroyed my career of 40 years," he alleged.He had documentary proof to back his claims, the former police official said."There was no saffron terrorism. Everything was fake," Mujawar said. *—PTI*



Retired inspector, Mehiboob Mujawar who was formerly with the ATS; RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat PHOTO: PTI

DELHI PREPARES FOR DISASTER

A field-level, multi-agency disaster management mock drill was carried out at 55 locations across Delhi on Friday to assess response preparedness in case of earthquake or industrial accidents. The exercise began with the triggering of a simulated earthquake scenario, followed by mock chemical leaks in industrial zones PHOTO: PTI

70% of India's elderly financially dependent: Report

NEW DELHI, 1 AUG

A recent report reveals that nearly 70 percent of India's elderly remain financially dependent, often working after retirement to survive.

The study, "Ageing in India: Challenges and Opportunities," by the Sankala Foundation with NITI Aayog and other agencies, highlights ongoing economic insecurities despite increased life expectancy.

It reports that 6.4 per cent of seniors reduced meals, and some went hungry or abstained from eating for a day. Health issues such as cardiovascular diseases (35.6 per cent), diabetes (13.2 per cent), and mental health problems are rising. Isolation affects 18.7 per cent women. *—PTI*

T'gana sheep 'scam': ED seizes 200 'mule' a/cs

NEW DELHI/ HYDERABAD, 1 AUG

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Friday said it has seized passbooks, debit cards and cheque books belonging to more than 200 'mule' bank accounts following raids in alleged sheep rearing and distribution scam worth crores of rupees that allegedly took place in Telangana during the previous BRS regime.

These bank accounts are linked to an illegal betting app. It also recovered materials that indicate "kickbacks" being paid to some government officials and others.

The Telangana police had arrested four government officers in the case.

ED raided eight locations in Hyderabad related to beneficiaries and alleged middlemen involved in the scam.

"Substantial" funds were transferred to the bank accounts of several persons/ entities in lieu of supply of sheep for beneficiaries under the SRDS.A CAG Audit Report found several irregularities in the implementationThough the estimated loss to the government was found to be Rs 253.93 crore in seven states, the loss is likely to exceed Rs 1,000 crore in the state. *—PTI*

NISAR mission enters 90-day crucial commissioning phase

CHENNAI, 1 AUG

The historic NISAR mission, a landmark collaboration between NASA and ISRO, has entered its crucial 90-day commissioning phase, during which scientists will carry out rigorous checks, calibrations and orbital adjustments to prepare the satellite for full-scale earth observation.

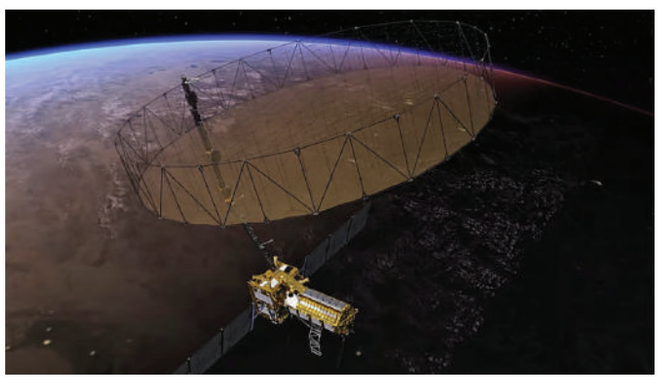
The critical phase follows the successful launch of the radar imaging satellite on 30 July aboard a GSLV-F16 rocket from Andhra Pradesh's Srikharikota.

"NISAR, inserted at an altitude of 737 km, has to rise up to 747 km and it will take about 45-50 days for those operations to take place," Gerald W Bawden, program manager for Natural Hazards Research at NASA's Earth Sciences Division said.

After the commissioning the radars will be activated and it will start collecting data over "all ice, all land, all the time" from the Earth.

"The resolution will be 5 metres by 5 metre, which is a lot of data. It is more data that NASA has collected in any other mission."

ISRO Chairman V Narayanan said NISAR satellite's launch was one of the most precise launches in the world, and NASA was excited to see that India could successfully conduct using the indigenously developed GSLV Mark vehicle. *—PTI*



Commissioning phase follows the successful launch PHOTO: NASA

HC bars TN from naming schemes after MK Stalin

CHENNAI, 1 AUG

The Madras High Court has directed the Tamil Nadu government that while launching and operating welfare schemes through various advertisements, the name of any living personality, photograph of any former Chief Minister/ideological leaders or party insignia/emblem/ flag shall not be included.

The first bench comprising Chief Justice M M Shrivatsava and Justice Sunder Mohan passed the interim order on Thursday on a petition filed by AIADMK MP CV Shanmugam and advocate Iniyan.

In his petition, Shanmugam sought to restrain the state government from introducing/rebranding any scheme in the name of any living personality pending disposal of his Writ Petition.

In its order, the bench made it clear that it has not passed any order against launching, implementation or operation of any welfare scheme of the government.The bench said prima facie it found the prayer has been made on the apprehension that the state is proceeding to launch many welfare schemes. *—PTI*

TN CM MK Stalin PHOTO: PTI

BENGALI MIGRANT ROW

Citizens can go anywhere in India, says Sen

KOLKATA, 1 AUG

- The TMC has been protesting, alleging that Bengali-speaking people, especially poor Muslim migrant workers, are being harassed in BJP-ruled states and being branded illegal Bangladeshi immigrants.

Wading into the political slugfest over the alleged harassment of Bengali migrant workers in other parts of the country, noted economist Amartya Sen said every citizen of India has the freedom to go wherever they want, and any effort to curb that must be objected to.

Sen said it doesn't matter whether a person is a Bengali, Punjabi or a Marwari, the freedom to go wherever he wants and speak whichever language he wants is his constitutional right.

"Every citizen of India has the right to be happy. We have to respect everyone...," he said.

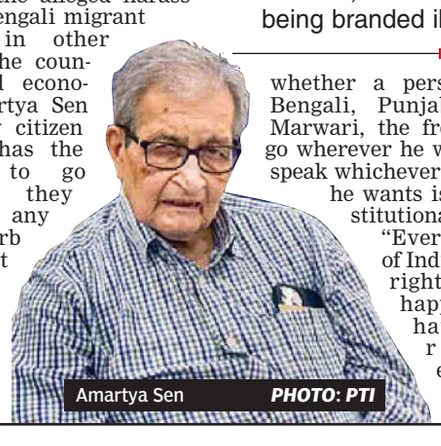
Sen said if Bengalis are being tortured and neglected, it must be objected to.

"The language that was integrated with 'Charyapad' (Bangla), its value must be acknowledged. Various poems have been written in that language. The messages of Rabindranath Tagore and Kazi Nazrul Islam have been laid out very clearly in their works. These values must be acknowledged," he said.

The TMC has been protesting, alleging that Bengali-speaking people, especially poor Muslim migrant workers, are being harassed in BJP-ruled states and being branded illegal Bangladeshi immigrants.

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has led a mega rally in Kolkata over the issue in July, and also started 'Bhasa Andolan', sharpening her attack on the BJP.

The BJP dismissed the allegations, claiming that the TMC did not think about the welfare of migrant workers over the last 14 years, and was now raising the issue with an eye on next year's assembly elections in the state. *—PTI*



Amartya Sen PHOTO: PTI

Centre withdraws order on 'Udaipur Files' release

NEW DELHI, 1 AUG

The Centre on Friday informed the Delhi High Court that it was withdrawing its decision granting nod to the release of the film 'Udaipur Files - Kanhaiya Lal Tailor Murder', which is scheduled to hit the theatres on 8 August.

The court which was hearing two pleas challenging the Centre's decision, directed the parties to the revision plea to appear before the government on 4 August to make their submissions.

The court was informed by the producer of the film's producer that they would take some time for making arrangements for releasing it by engaging the theatres.

The court questioned the Centre as to under what authority it ordered six cuts in the film while exercising its revisional powers.

The counsel for the Centre informed the court that they would withdraw their order, revisit the decision and pass a fresh order in accordance with the law.

The court disposed off the two petitions aginst the film's release filed by Mohammed Javed, one of the accused in the Kanhaiya Lal murder case, and Jamiat Ulema-i-Hind president Maulana Arshad Madani.

The petitioner's counsel had contended that the Centre exercised its revisional powers in a manner that contravened the statutory scheme of the Cinematograph Act.—*PTI*

POWER TUSSLE

Kerala Guv appoints 2 VCs, CM says cancel it

T'PURAM, 1 AUG

The tussle between Kerala government and the Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar over the appointment of university vice chancellors has taken a turn for the worse, with the latter 'unilaterally' posting temporary VCs at two universities without any discussion with the government.

The Kerala Governor, acting as Chancellor, had on Friday reappointed Ciza Thomas and K Sivaprasad as interim vice chancellors of State Digital University and APJ Abdul Kalam Technological University respectively.

The appointments comply with the Apex Court's order on an appeal by the Governor against a High Court verdict in favour of the state government.

Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar PHOTO: PTI

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, shot off a letter to the Governor demanding the cancellation of the appointments as it was not done in accordance with the Acts of the two universities and was against the essence of the verdict given by the SC.

The Higher Education Minister and Law Minister would seek an appointment with the Governor to discuss the issue. *—PTI*

POSH Act not to cover politicians: SC

NEW DELHI, 1 AUG

The Supreme Court on Friday refused to entertain a PIL seeking to bring major political parties within the purview of the 2013 POSH Act, which aims to protect women from sexual harassment at workplaces, saying the matter was for Parliament to decide.

A bench comprising Chief Justice BR Gavai and Justice K Vinod Chandran heard the PIL filed by Yogamaya MG.

The petitioner's advocate Shobha Gupta sought a direction to treat political parties as "employers" under the POSH Act, saying it will require them to constitute internal complaints committees (ICCs) to address sexual harassment allegations.

"This is a matter of the Parliament. How can we interfere," the CJI asked, adding that the petitioner can get some women parliamentarians on board and present a private bill in Parliament. *—PTI*

SC FLAGS HP'S ECOLOGICAL IMBALANCE

NEW DELHI, 1 AUG

The Supreme Court has flagged the ecological imbalance in Himachal Pradesh and cautioned that the entire state may "vanish in thin air" if the situation does not change.

"We want to impress upon the state government and Union of India that revenue cannot be earned at the cost of environment and ecology," the court said.

"If things proceed the way they are as on date, the day is not far when the entire state of HP may vanish in thin air from the map of the country," it said.The top court made the observations on 28 July while dealing with a petition against an order of the Himachal Pradesh High Court. *—PTI*

Allegations of impotency in divorce not defamatory: HC

MUMBAI, 1 AUG

The Bombay High Court has dismissed a man's complaint against his estranged wife, ruling that allegations of impotency made in matrimonial proceedings do not amount to defamation when made to protect her interests.

Justice SM Modak stated that in a Hindu Marriage Act petition, such allegations are relevant.

The court rejected the man's plea to pursue a defamation case against his wife and her family for claiming he was impotent in divorce proceedings.

The judge highlighted that the woman's allegations were justified to demonstrate cruelty during the marriage, and that "when litigation between spouses arises in a matrimonial relationship, then the wife is justified in making those allegations to support her interest." *—PTI*

A THREAD OF LOVE

A shop owner arranges 'Rakhis' ahead of the 'Raksha Bandhan' festival, in Agartala on Friday
PHOTO: PTI

Statehood a distant dream as Gaza nightmare deepens

As Gaza lies in ruins and hopes for peace fade, recent moves by France, the United Kingdom, and Canada to recognise a Palestinian state have stirred diplomatic waves — but they offer little immediate relief or change on the ground. For many Palestinians, statehood remains a distant aspiration overshadowed by the daily horrors of war.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu continues to oppose any form of Palestinian statehood. He has vowed to retain indefinite control over east Jerusalem, the occupied West Bank, and Gaza — territories seized by Israel in the 1967 war, and long sought by Palestinians as the foundation of an independent state.

More than 100 Israeli settlements now sprawl across the West Bank, housing over half a million settlers, and effectively fragmenting Palestinian territory. Meanwhile, Gaza has been reduced to what humanitarian agencies describe as a "smouldering wasteland", teetering on the edge of famine. Israel insists its military campaign will continue and has reportedly explored plans to relocate much of Gaza's population of roughly 2 million to other countries.

Despite mounting international concern, the United States — the only power with real influence over Israel — remains firmly in its corner. For critics, the diplomatic recognition of Palestinian statehood by Western allies falls short of meaningful action.

"It's a bit odd that the response to daily atrocities in Gaza, including what is by all accounts deliberate starvation, is to recognise a theoretical Palestinian state that may never actually come into being," said Khaled Elgindy, a scholar at Georgetown University's Centre for Contemporary Arab Studies. "It looks more like a way for these countries to appear to be doing something."

Fathi Nimer, a policy fellow at the Palestinian think tank Al-Shabaka, was more blunt. "There is a wide tool set at the disposal of these countries — suspending trade agreements, arms embargoes, sanctions — but there is no political will to use it."

Palestinians carry sacks of flour unloaded from a humanitarian aid convoy in Gaza Strip ***PHOTO: PTI***

A symbolic step, but not a hollow one

While largely symbolic, recognition from Britain and France would make them the third and fourth permanent members of the UN Security Council to back Palestinian statehood, leaving the United States as the lone holdout among the five.

"We're talking about major countries and major Israeli allies," said Alon Pinkas, a former Israeli consul general in New York. "They're isolating the US and leaving Israel dependent — not on the US, but on the whims and erratic behaviour of one person, Trump."

Recognition, while not transformative in the short term, could have long-term implications. Hugh Lovatt, an expert at the European Council on Foreign Relations, argues it could help strengthen efforts to resist full annexation of the West Bank. But, he warned, "The challenge is for those recognising countries to match their recognition with other steps — practical steps."

Such steps could carry weight if Israeli-Palestinian peace talks, dormant since Netanyahu's return to power in 2009, are ever revived.

"If and when negotiations do resume — probably not soon, but eventually — it puts Palestine on a much more equal footing," said Julie Norman, professor of Middle East politics at University College London. "It has statehood as a starting point for those negotiations, rather than a certainly-not-assured endpoint."

Israel dismisses recognition as reward for terror

Israel's opposition to Palestinian statehood is long-standing, but hardened further after Hamas' 7 October 2023 attacks, which triggered the current war. Netanyahu insists that recognising a Palestinian state rewards terrorism and could result in a larger Hamas-run entity on Israel's borders.

Though Hamas has at times indicated it could accept a Palestinian state within 1967 borders, it remains officially committed to Israel's destruction. Western governments supporting Palestinian statehood envision a future led not by Hamas, but by more moderate political rivals — notably the Palestinian Authority (PA), which governs parts of the West Bank.

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas supports a two-state solution and continues to cooperate with Israel on security matters. Recently, he ended the PA's longstanding policy of paying stipends to families of prisoners and slain militants — a controversial programme Israel has long condemned.

These concessions, however, have earned Abbas little favour from Israel or its key allies. Meanwhile, many Palestinians view the PA as complicit, corrupt, or ineffective.

"There's plenty to criticise about the PA," said Lovatt, "but often the failings of the Palestinian leadership are exaggerated in a way that relieves Israel of its own obligations."

A shifting tide — but not fast enough

If Palestinians had been told in September 2023 that several major powers were preparing to recognise their state, that the UN's highest court had ordered Israel to end the occupation, and that the International Criminal Court had issued an arrest warrant for Netanyahu, they might have believed their dream of independence was nearing fulfilment.

But those diplomatic and legal developments are overshadowed by the sheer scale of destruction in Gaza and intensifying military operations in the West Bank. *—PTI*

LETTERS write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

SALAR سالار

NE's only floating school struggles to stay afloat

Eight years after Northeast India's first floating elementary school was set up for children of the fishing community on Loktak Lake in Manipur, the school is now battling to survive.

With the community finding no other way to keep the school running, they have sought government help.

The Loktak Floating Elementary School was set up in 2017 at Langolsabi Leikai in Champu Khangpok, a floating village of nearly 330 residents.

It was built atop thick floating masses of aquatic vegetation known as phumdis — a hallmark of Loktak Lake. These floating biomass islands, about 4 to 5 feet thick, support both huts and the school itself.

Rajen Oinam, secretary of the All Loktak Lake Areas Fishermen Union Manipur, which runs the school, told PTI, "The one-room school, measuring 24 by 15 feet, lacks even basic infrastructure such as desks and tables. We had a lot of hope when we started, but this year alone, seven students dropped out. Only 23 students are currently enrolled, up to class 2. Classes are held from 8 am to noon, twice a week."

"Children not only from Champu Khangpok but also from distant floating huts come here to learn how to read and write. However, ever since ethnic violence erupted in the state, we've been preoccupied with managing relief camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs), which has taken our focus away from the school," he added.

> Eight years after Northeast India's first floating elementary school was set up for children of the fishing community on Loktak Lake in Manipur, the school is now battling to survive.With the community finding no other way to keep the school running, they have sought government help.

Sharing a unique feature of the huts built on floating phumdis, Oinam said, "Often, the huts drift away overnight to another location, in some cases more than 3 km away, when there are thunderstorms accompanied by strong winds. To prevent this, huts are stabilised by anchoring bamboo poles into the lakebed. The school itself is tied with ropes to keep it from floating away."

Reaching the school is a challenge.

"It takes about one-and-a-half hours by traditional wooden canoe from Ningthoukhong Project Gate in Bishnupur district," said Oinam.

"While most huts use bamboo for flooring, the school uses wooden boards, covered with carpets. Apart from solar-powered electricity, the village has no modern amenities," he added.

Though villagers have been trying hard, the school still lacks official recognition.

"We have submitted applications to the authorities in Bishnupur district, but there has been no response. With government recognition, we could get support for infrastructure and teacher salaries. For now, the Bishnupur-based People Resources Development Association keeps the school running by supplying books, stationery, and minimal salaries for the teachers," Oinam said.

N. Kumar, a fisherman and resident of the floating village, explained why the school matters.

"There are schools on land in Bishnupur, but they're over an hour away. Parents have to wait for classes to finish to bring their children back. This is time-consuming and expensive. Since both men and women in our community fish to sustain the family, the floating school is more convenient," he added.

Despite being surrounded by water, residents face a scarcity of safe drinking water.

"The lake water is often contaminated due to untreated urban waste and solid plastics. We collect cleaner water from deeper parts of the lake, then boil or filter it before drinking," Kumar added.

Most huts on the phumdis are compact and multifunctional.

"Huts made of reeds are generally about 20 by 15 feet and 10 feet high. Cooking, eating, and sleeping all happen in that one room," he said.

Ramananda Wangkhei rakpam, a functionary with Ngamee Lup, a federation of fishermen unions, said, "The floating school is meant for small children who need constant supervision. Older children are sent to boarding schools in Imphal and elsewhere." *—PTI*

The Loktak Floating Elementary School was set up in 2017 at Langolsabi Leikai in Champu Khangpok, a floating village of nearly 330 residents ***PHOTO: PTI***

Doping surge casts dark shadows over Indian wrestling's future

The alarming rise in doping cases in Indian wrestling has cast a shadow over the sport's rapid ascent on the global stage. As per the National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA), wrestling has the second-highest number of dope offenders among all sporting disciplines in India — 19 athletes currently face suspension, five of whom are minors.

The provisional suspension of U23 world champion and Olympian Reetika Hooda has once again brought the doping menace into sharp focus. While India's wrestling performances — especially at the junior level — have been highly encouraging, the growing influence of banned substances threatens to derail years of progress.

Recent victories over powerhouses like Japan and the USA in junior team events have positioned India as a rising force in world wrestling. With consistent medal hauls across the World Championships, Asian Games, and Olympics, Indian wrestlers now enter major events as serious contenders. This sporting success has brought with it financial rewards, government jobs, lucrative sponsorships, and social prestige — incentives that have reshaped the ambitions of athletes and their families.

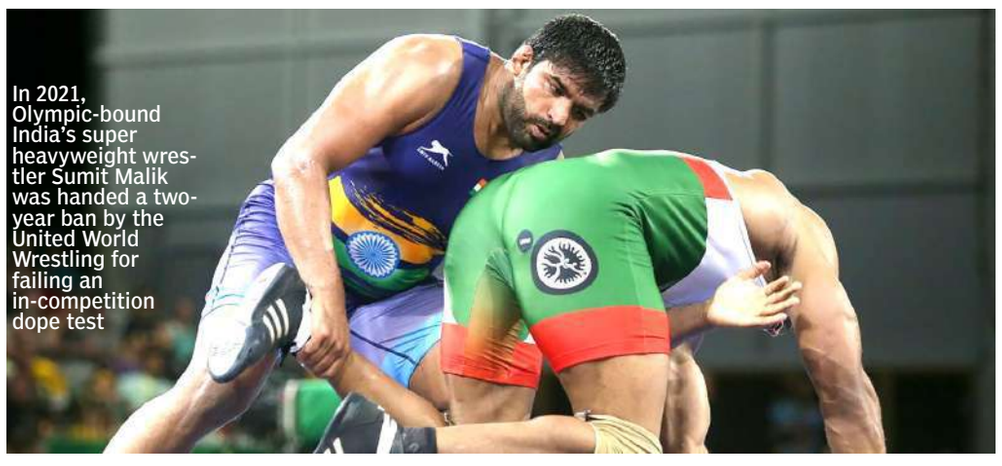
Lure of shortcuts, lack of guidance

While most coaches and parents understand that wrestling demands endurance, strength, and nearly a decade of committed training, not all have the patience — or awareness — to stay the course. Financial constraints often push athletes and families toward shortcuts that promise quick success.

"I do not come from a sporting background, so we hardly know what the right step is," said the father of a minor wrestler currently suspended for doping. "A reputed wrestler told my daughter that her performance improved after using supplements from a local supplier. We were warned not to trust unauthorised people, but we still went ahead."

Elite sports NGOs such as JSW, OGQ, and Reliance support many promising wrestlers, not only funding their training but also guiding their nutrition. Though Reetika Hooda received her supplements through Reliance, athletes often consume products from additional, unregulated sources.

Interviews with families in Haryana — particularly in Rohtak — reveal a booming market of unverified local nutrition suppliers. "A junior wrestler's diet requires at least Rs 70,000 a month — 5-6kg almonds, 7-8kg desi ghee, 1.5kg paneer, 3kg milk daily, plus figs, chia seeds, sprouts, and kiwis. Not all parents can afford this," said one father. "So local suppliers offer 'affordable' supplements tailored to budgets, without disclosing contents. The result is visible in the doping numbers."



In 2021, Olympic-bound India's super heavyweight wrestler Sumit Malik was handed a two-year ban by the United World Wrestling for failing an in-competition dope test

The Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) has acknowledged the issue. "These suppliers sell without bills. If a wrestler can produce a bill, NADA can test the supplement. But there are rarely any bills," a WFI official said. "We counsel our athletes regularly, individual is impossible.

Modus operandi of rogue suppliers

These so-called nutritionists actively target wrestlers and boxers during felicitation functions, offering free products and financial support. They often use images of successful athletes to market their supplements, further influencing young and impressionable sportspersons.

At times, these suppliers provide cash incentives to akhadas (wrestling academies), ensuring a ready market for their products. Sir Chhotu Ram Stadium in Rohtak, a prominent centre under Haryana government coach Mandeep Saini, has produced a host of elite wrestlers — including Rio Olympic bronze medallist Sakshi Malik and Reetika Hooda.

Coach Saini, disheartened by Reetika's suspension, maintains a strict policy on supplements. "I don't even recommend glucose. Ask anyone. But once the girls leave the training centre, we can't control what they do," he said. The centre, which now trains 80 female wrestlers (up from 20 in 2010), remains a beacon of discipline.

> The alarming rise in doping cases in Indian wrestling has cast a shadow over the sport's rapid ascent on the global stage.

World Championship medallist Mansi Ahlawat, who trains at the centre, added: "Parents often ignore coaches. They want immediate success. But wrestling requires years of toil. Mandeep sir is strict but gives us the freedom we need."

The stakes are high for many families. "I'm a farmer, no sporting background. But if needed, I'm ready to sell my land to help my daughter become a top wrestler," said Gulshan, father of Raveena. "It's not just about jobs anymore — it's about honour."

However, a senior wrestler issued a stark warning: "Everyone wants to become Sakshi Malik overnight. It takes 10 years. The younger ones are swayed too easily."

Systemic gaps and long-term impact

Experts believe the absence of national camps has played a major role in the rise of doping cases. The Covid-19 pandemic and prolonged protests at Jantar Mantar meant that national training camps remained shut for extended periods. During this time, wrestlers trained in private centres without close monitoring or regular anti-doping checks.

National camps — where NADA testing is routine — resumed only in March this year. This left a dangerous window for misinformation, negligence, and malpractice to take root, particularly at the grassroots level.

Since Sushil Kumar's bronze in Beijing 2008, wrestling has never failed to deliver a medal at the Olympics. With the current talent pool and strong infrastructure, India stands on the brink of becoming a global wrestling powerhouse.

But that future is at risk. The doping crisis — if unchecked — could tarnish achievements, strip medals, and rob deserving athletes of opportunities.

The onus now lies with sports bodies, government agencies, parents, and coaches to restore credibility.

Unless stringent measures are taken and awareness driven deep into the system, Indian wrestling's golden era may be undone by a few desperate shortcuts *—PTI*

Trump hits 69 partners with new tariffs

Canada hit with 35 per cent over drug menace, Swiss 'shocked' by wrath

WASHINGTON, 1 AUG

US President Donald Trump signed an executive order that set new tariffs on a 69 US trading partners to go into effect on 7 August— the next step in his trade agenda that will test the global economy and sturdiness of American alliances built up over decades.

The order capped off a hectic Thursday as nations sought to continue negotiating with Trump. It set the rates for 68 countries and the 27-member European Union, with a baseline 10 per cent rate to be charged on countries not listed in the order.

While several other nations had a week before the new tariffs were to go into effect Trump raised the tariff rate on US imports from Canada to 35 per cent from 25 per cent, effective Friday.

He accused Canada of not taking enough action to curb the trans-border flow of fentanyl.

Barring Myanmar, which was hit with a 40 per cent tariff, all of India's neighbours had lower tariffs than New Delhi's 25 per cent – Pakistan got 19 per cent, Afghanistan 15 per cent, Bangladesh 20 per cent, Indonesia 19 per cent and Sri Lanka 20 per cent.

China was notably absent from the list, as Trump has a 12 August deadline with the nation.

Trump reached a deal with South Korea on Wednesday, and earlier with the European Union, Japan, Indonesia and the Philippines. His commerce secretary, Howard Lutnick, said on Fox News Channel's 'Hannity' that there were agreements with Cambodia and Thailand after they had agreed to a ceasefire to their border conflict.

The UK had a 10 per cent tariff, 5 per cent lower than what the EU had negotiated. On the other hand, Switzerland was hit with a massive 39 per cent tariff, which the government called "stunning".

South Africa was hit with a massive 30 per cent tariff, which comes after Trump set out to humiliate President Cyril Ramaphosa over an alleged white-genocide in the Oval Office.

Taiwan, which has been looking to the US in the face of Chinese aggression, was also hit with 20 per cent tariff.

Mexico's tariff deadline was extended for 90-days, which allows it to avoid 30 per cent tariff on most non-automotive and non-metal goods. Trump said autos would face a 25 per cent tariff, while copper, aluminium and steel would be taxed at 50 per cent during the negotiating period.

Notably, Syria was hit with a 41 per cent tariff, while US' close ally Israel got 15 per cent.

US President Donald Trump did not announce a tariff on China as the negotiations are expected to conclude on 8 August **PHOTO: X @WHITEHOUSE**

US HIRING SLOWS

US employers added just 73,000 jobs last month and Labour Department revisions showed that hiring was much weaker than previously reported in May and June. *—PTI*

THE NEW TARIFF RATES

AFGHANISTAN	15%
ALGERIA	30%
BANGLADESH	20%
BRAZIL	50%
CANADA	35%
JAPAN	15%
INDIA	25%
IRAQ	35%
ISRAEL	15%
MALAYSIA	19%
LIBYA	30%
PAKISTAN	19%
SOUTH AFRICA	30%
SRI LANKA	20%
SWITZERLAND	39%
SYRIA	41%
TAIWAN	20%

Tariffs are making America GREAT & RICH Again... One year ago, America was a dead country, now it is the "hottest country!"
—Donald Trump, US President

Canadians will be our own best customer, creating more well-paying careers at home. We can give ourselves more than any foreign government can ever take away by building with Canadian workers and by using Canadian resources to benefit all Canadians
—Mark Carney, Canadian Prime Minister

Pakistan looks forward to further positive engagements and close cooperation with the United States in the areas of investment, artificial intelligence, crypto currency, mines and minerals, energy, and other emerging sectors
—Pakistan's Foreign Ministry

Twenty per cent from the beginning has not been our goal. We hope that in further negotiations we will get a more beneficial and more reasonable tax rate. We want to strengthen US Taiwan cooperation in national security, tech, and multiple areas
—Lai Ching-te, Taiwan President

Trump threatens big pharma over prices

WASHINGTON, 1 AUG

US President Donald Trump on Thursday (local time) posted on Truth Social a letter he sent to Novartis CEO Vasant Narasimhan, directing the company to comply with his Executive Order on lowering drug prices for Americans or face consequences.

In a letter addressed from the White House, Trump said that he had signed an Executive Order titled Delivering Most Favoured Nation Prescription Drug Pricing to American Patients "to stop global freeloading and guarantee that Americans pay the same prices enjoyed by other developed nations."

He said that "right now, brand name drug prices in the United States are up to three times higher on average than elsewhere for the identical medicines," and that "this unacceptable burden on hardworking American families ends with my Administration."

"I am calling on Novartis and every manufacturer doing business in our great country to take the following actions within the next 60 days," President Donald Trump wrote. *—ANI*

Trump asks Fed Board to take power from Powell

WASHINGTON, 1 AUG

US President Donald Trump has urged the Federal Reserve's board to take control from Chair Jerome Powell for not cutting interest rates. Posting on Truth Social, Trump described Powell as "stubborn" and demanded the board "assume control, and do what everyone knows has to be done" if rates are not lowered "substantially". Trump advocates for a 3 percentage point cut from the current 4.33 per cent, arguing it will boost growth. Despite a 2.6 per cent inflation rate, Trump claims "there is virtually no inflation". The Fed has held rates steady this year to assess tariffs' impact. The Supreme Court said Trump cannot dismiss Powell over policy. *—PTI*

Prosecutors seek longer sentence for Diddy

NEW YORK, 1 AUG

Prosecutors have urged a Manhattan judge to reject hip-hop mogul Sean 'Diddy' Combs' renewed USD 50 million bail request, stating nothing has changed since his conviction last month on prostitution-related charges. They argued their initial estimate of a four to five-year prison sentence was significantly less than what the guidelines now recommend. Combs, 55, was acquitted of racketeering and sex trafficking but convicted of transporting women and male sex workers for sexual encounters, filmed by him. Judge Arun Subramanian previously denied bail, citing insufficient evidence that Combs posed no danger, though the defence was allowed to renew the request. Prosecutors highlighted improved conditions at Brooklyn's Metropolitan Detention Center, asserting that Combs' detention remains mandatory and justified. *—PTI*

WHO puts travel restrictions on Pak over polio concerns

ISLAMABAD, 1 AUG

The World Health Organization (WHO) has extended its conditional international travel restrictions on Pakistan for another three months amid ongoing concerns over wild poliovirus type 1 (WPV1). The decision was made during the 42nd meeting of the WHO Emergency Committee for Polio on 18 June, which highlighted continued transmission in Pakistan and Afghanistan. The WHO cited cross-border movement and displaced populations as key factors facilitating the spread, noting "the spread of WPV1 is facilitated by cross-border travel and the movement of displaced populations." *—ANI*

Justin Timberlake diagnosed with Lyme disease

LOS ANGELES, 1 AUG

Justin Timberlake revealed on Instagram that he has been diagnosed with Lyme disease, describing it as "relentlessly debilitating, both mentally and physically." The singer shared the news while reflecting on his recent Forget Tomorrow tour, which concluded in Turkey. Despite considering ending the tour, Timberlake chose to continue, saying "the joy that performing brings me far outweighs the fleeting stress my body was feeling. I'm so glad I kept going." Lyme disease, transmitted by deer ticks, can cause flu-like symptoms, neurological issues, and joint pain, but is usually treatable with antibiotics. Timberlake cancelled or postponed several shows due to health issues, including bronchitis and laryngitis. *—PTI*

Kyiv mourns after Russian strikes kill 31

KYIV, 1 AUG

Ukrainian capital Kyiv observed an official day of mourning Friday, a day after a Russian drone and missile attack on the city killed 31 people, including five children, and injured more than 150, officials said.

The youngest victim in Thursday's strikes was two years old, and 16 of the injured were children, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said.

Meanwhile, in an article published in RT on Friday, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov accused the mayor of the Ukrainian city of Lviv, Andrey Sadovy, of proposing to exchange the exhumed remains of soldiers from a World War II memorial, whom he described as "occupiers", for Ukrainian soldiers captured by Russia in the ongoing conflict.

As the conflict raged, Ukrainian President Vladimir Zelensky urged Western nations to support regime change in Moscow to protect his country from what he described as a "Russian aggression," RT reported.

"I believe Russia can be pushed to stop this war... But if the world doesn't aim to change the regime in Russia, that means even after the war ends, Moscow will still try to destabilise neighbours," RT reported. *—PTI&ANI*

A destroyed apartment building after a Russian missile attack in Kyiv on Thursday **PHOTO: PTI**

At least 91 killed in Gaza as Trump's envoy begins trip

DEIR AL-BALAH, 1 AUG

At least 91 Palestinians were killed and more than 600 wounded while attempting to get aid in the past 24 hours, the Gaza Health Ministry said Thursday. The victims included 54 people killed while awaiting food in northern Gaza near the Zikim crossing on Wednesday, the ministry said. The toll is expected to rise further as many of those killed or wounded were brought to isolated, undersupplied hospitals in northern Gaza and have not yet been counted.

This comes as US President Donald Trump's special envoy Steve Witkoff arrived in Israel on Thursday to discuss the worsening humanitarian situation in the Strip. Witkoff and US Ambassador Mike Huckabee will inspect food distribution in Gaza on Friday, the White House said.

Similarly, German Foreign Minister Johann Wadephul arrived in Israel on Thursday on a two-day trip that will also take him to the Israeli-occupied West Bank. Germany, traditionally a staunch ally of Israel, has been increasingly critical recently of Israel's actions in Gaza, similar to the sudden shift seen by other Western nations.

Meanwhile, the new Israeli airdrop aid system have reportedly set off stampedes and skirmishes as hungry crowds scream, fight and jostle for the parcels. *—PTI*

Humanitarian aid being airdropped to Palestinians over Khan Younis, in the Gaza Strip on Friday **PHOTO: PTI**

Colombia reports surge in Amazon deforestation

BOGOTA, 1 AUG

Colombia's government reported on Thursday a sharp overall rise in deforestation in the country's Amazon rainforest last year, reversing much of the progress made during a historic low in 2023.

The national meteorological agency said pasture expansion for cattle, illicit crops, illegal mining, and unregulated infrastructure development were to blame.

The data was released just a month after Colombia's environment ministry had noted a drop in the destructive practice in the first quarter of this year, citing stronger community coordination and a crackdown on environmental crime.

The overall figures for last year show that the country lost 113,608 hectares of forest in 2024 — a 43 per cent increase compared to the year before, when deforestation had dropped to its lowest level in over two decades.

The data presented by Environment Minister Lena Estrada Añokazi and the IDEAM meteorological agency show the heaviest losses were concentrated in the Amazon region. *—PTI*

El Salvador eases presidential term norms

SAN SALVADOR, 1 AUG

The party of El Salvador President Nayib Bukele approved constitutional changes in the country's National Assembly on Thursday that will allow indefinite presidential reelection and extend presidential terms to six years.

Lawmaker Ana Figueroa from the New Ideas party had proposed the changes to five articles of the constitution. The proposal also included eliminating the second round of the election where the two top vote-getters from the first round face off.

New Ideas and its allies in the National Assembly quickly approved the proposals with the supermajority they hold.

Bukele overwhelmingly won reelection last year despite a constitutional ban. *—PTI*

INDONESIA SET TO RELEASE PRISONERS

JAKARTA, 1 AUG

Indonesia is set to begin releasing hundreds of convicts languishing for years in its notoriously overcrowded prisons after the Parliament approved the first stage of President Prabowo Subianto's wide-ranging clemency plan.

The first group of 1,116 prisoners will begin leaving prisons next week, and that will include prominent rivals of previous President Joko Widodo who were jailed during his term, as well as Papuan independence activists. The government considers their movement unarmed, the President said. *—PTI*

CARBON NEUTRALITY

Vatican plans to build 430 ha solar farm

ROME, 1 AUG

Italy agreed to a Vatican plan to turn a 430-hectare field north of Rome into a vast solar farm that the Holy See hopes will generate enough electricity to meet its needs and turn Vatican City into the world's first carbon-neutral state.

The agreement stipulates that the development of the Santa Maria Galeria site will preserve the agricultural use of the land and minimise the environmental impact on the territory, according to a Vatican statement.

The Vatican will reportedly be exempt from paying Italian taxes to import the solar panels, but won't benefit from the financial incentives that Italians enjoy when they go solar. Italy can use the field in its accounting for reaching the European Union's clean energy targets. Any excess electricity generated by the farm beyond the Vatican's needs would be given to the local community, officials said.

Vatican officials have estimated it will cost under 100 million euros to develop the solar farm, and that once it is approved by the Italian parliament, the contracts to do the work could be put up for bids.

Vatican Foreign Minister Archbishop Paul Gallagher signed the agreement with Italy's Ambassador to the Holy See, Francesco Di Nitto.

Pope Francis last year asked the Vatican to study developing the area into a vast solar farm, hoping to put into practice his preaching about the need to transition away from fossil fuels and find clean. Pope Leo XIV visited the site in June and affirmed that he intended to see Francis' vision through. Leo has strongly taken up Francis' ecological mantle, recently using a new set of prayers and readings inspired by Pope Francis' environmental legacy. *—PTI*

The Vatican will reportedly be exempt from paying Italian taxes to import the solar panels, but won't benefit from the financial incentives that Italians enjoy when they go solar **PHOTO: X**

SA tries 'radioactive' rhino horns to fight poaching

MOKOPANE, 1 AUG

A South African university launched an anti-poaching campaign to inject the horns of rhinos with radioactive isotopes that it says are harmless for the animals but can be detected by customs agents.

Under the collaborative project involving the University of the Witwatersrand, nuclear energy officials and conservationists, five rhinos were injected in what the university hopes will be the start of a mass injection of the declining rhino population.

They're calling it the Rhisotope Project.

Last year, about 20 rhinos at a sanctuary were injected with isotopes in trials that paved the way for Thursday's launch. The radioactive isotopes, even at low levels, can be recognised by radiation detectors at airports and borders, leading to the arrest of poachers and traffickers.

Researchers at Witwatersrand's Radiation and Health Physics Unit say that tests conducted in the pilot study confirmed that the radioactive material was not harmful to the rhinos.

The tests also found that horns could be detected inside full 40-foot shipping containers. South Africa has the largest population of rhinos, with an estimated 16,000, but the country experiences high levels of poaching, with about 500 rhinos killed for their horns every year. *—PTI*

ED summons Anil Ambani in loan 'fraud' case on 5 August

NEW DELHI, 1 AUG

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has summoned Reliance Group Chairman Anil Ambani the ED headquarters in Delhi for questioning on 5 August in a money laundering case linked to alleged bank loan fraud worth crores of rupees against his group companies, sources said on Friday.

The federal probe agency will record his statement of Ambani, 66, under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) once he deposes, they said, adding that some executives of his group companies have also been summoned over the next few days.

The summons come after the federal agency conducted searches at 35 premises of 50 companies and 25 people, including executives of his business group, last week. The searches, launched on July 24, went on for three days.

The action pertains to alleged financial irregularities and collective loan "diversion" pegged at more than Rs 17,000 crore by multiple group companies of Anil Ambani, including Reliance Infrastructure (R Infra).

The agency found, on the basis of a Sebi report, that R Infra "diverted" funds disguised as inter-corporate deposits to Reliance Group companies through a company named CLE. It is alleged that R Infra did not disclose CLE as its "related party" to avoid approvals from shareholders and audit panels.

'FAKE' BANK GUARANTEE RACKET

The ED on Friday also conducted searches against an Odisha-based company that allegedly ran a "fake" bank guarantee issuance racket for business groups, which is also suspected to have provided a Rs 68 crore "assurance" for a Reliance Group company, sources said.

The case is against a Bhubaneswar located company named Biswal Tradelink and its directors. *—PTI*

US tariffs may cost $40B to India

SBI says Trump's tariffs will hurt US more by lowering GDP and boosting inflation

NEW DELHI, 1 AUG

The imposition of a 25 per cent US tariff will not have much impact on India's USD 85 billion worth of exports to America, and New Delhi will not grant any duty exemptions on agriculture items, dairy, and genetically modified (GM) products in the trade pact, sources said on Friday.

About half of the goods exported from India to the US are in the exemption category (such as pharma and electronic goods). So, the impact will be only on the remaining half, according to sources.

"More than half of India's exports to the US will not be impacted by the duty. Due to the Section 232 exemption of the US, only exports worth about USD 40 billion would be impacted with these tariffs," they added.

In 2024-25, the bilateral trade between India and the US stood at USD 131.8 billion with USD 86.5 billion exports and USD 45.3 billion imports.

According to think tank GTRI, the 25 per cent tariffs will not be applicable on the exempted categories, including finished pharmaceutical drugs, active pharmaceutical ingredients, and other key drug inputs; energy products such as crude oil, refined fuels, natural gas, coal, and electricity; critical minerals; and a wide range of electronics and semiconductors, like computers, tablets, smartphones, solid-state drives, flat panel displays, and integrated circuits.

PHOTO: FREEPIK

Sources also said that because of the use of animal feed in the American dairy sector, it would not be possible for India to provide duty concessions on such goods.

India has never given any duty concessions in any of its earlier trade pacts in this sector.

- During 2024–25, the bilateral trade between India and the US stood at USD 131.8 billion with USD 86.5 billion exports and USD 45.3 billion imports

Additionally, an SBI research said that the impact of tariff on Indian exports will be worse for US compared to India as America may face a lower GDP, higher inflation and a weaker dollar.

It also called implementation of the tariff a "bad business decision". *– PTI*

DAY OF GLOOM

Markets extend losses amid US tariff concerns

MUMBAI/NEW DELHI, 1 AUG

Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty declined sharply for the second straight session on Friday, tracking deep losses in metal, IT and telecom stocks amid trade-related concerns and widespread selling pressure in global markets.

Besides, persistent selling by foreign investors added to the gloom, according to experts.

In a volatile trade, the 30-share BSE Sensex tumbled 585.67 points or 0.72 per cent to settle at 80,599.91. During the day, it dropped 690.01 points or 0.84 per cent to 80,495.57.

The 50-share NSE Nifty declined 203 points or 0.82 per cent to 24,565.35.

Tata Steel, Maruti, Tata Motors, Infosys, Bharti Airtel and Tech Mahindra were also among the laggards.

However, Trent, Asian Paints, Hindustan Unilever, ITC, Kotak Mahindra Bank, and Reliance Industries were the gainers.

Sun Pharma

shares of Sun Pharmaceutical Industries tumbled 4.53 per cent after the company reported a 20 per cent on-year fall in consolidated net profit for the June quarter.

The company's stock dropped 4.49 per cent to settle at Rs 1,629.05 apiece on the BSE.

On the NSE, it dropped 4.53 per cent to Rs 1,629.30 a share.

Reliance Power, Infra

Shares of Reliance Power and Reliance Infrastructure hit their respective lower circuit limits on Friday amid reports that the Enforcement Directorate has summoned Reliance Group Chairman Anil Ambani for questioning on August 5 in a money laundering case.

The stock of Reliance Power tumbled 5 per cent to Rs 50.21 -- its lower circuit limit -- on the BSE.

Shares of Reliance Infrastructure also dropped 5 per cent to hit the lowest trading permissible limit for the day of Rs 311.60. *—PTI*

World shares retreat over Trump's tariffs

MANILA, 1 AUG

World shares retreated Friday following choppy trading on Wall Street that saw more losses and as investors assess President Donald Trump's order imposing new tariffs on 68 countries and the European Union starting in seven days.

Trump's tariffs order, has injected a new dose of uncertainty in an already uncertain process.

In early European trading, Germany's Dax fell 1.5 per cent to 23,697.31. Britain's FTSE 100 dropped 0.7 per cent to 9,068.97. In Paris, the CAC 40 shed 1.6 per cent to 7,647.56. *—PTI*

PHOTO: FREEPIK

Gold declines by ₹400 to ₹97,620/10g

NEW DELHI, 1 AUG

Gold prices dipped Rs 400 to Rs 97,620 per 10g in the national capital on Friday due to continuous selling by stockists, according to the All India Sarafa Association. Gold of 99.9 per cent purity had closed at Rs 98,020 per 10g in the previous market session. In the national capital, gold of 99.5 per cent purity dipped by Rs 300 to Rs 97,500 per 10g (inclusive of all taxes) on Friday against the preceding session's closing level of Rs 97,800 per 10g. Silver had ended at Rs 1,12,000 per kg in the previous market close. On the global front, spot gold went up 0.12 per cent to trade at USD 3,294.31 per ounce. *—PTI*

Manufacturing sector growth hits 16-month high

MUMBAI, 1 AUG

PHOTO: PIXABAY

India's manufacturing sector growth strengthened in July to a 16-month high of 59.1, supported by faster increases in new orders and output amid favourable demand conditions, a monthly survey said on Friday.

The seasonally adjusted HSBC India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index rose from 58.4 in June to 59.1 in July, signalling the strongest improvement in the health of the sector since March 2024.

In the Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) parlance, a print above 50 means expansion, while a score below 50 denotes contraction.

"India recorded a 59.1 manufacturing PMI in July, up from 58.4 during the prior month. This marked a 16-month high for the Indian manufacturing sector, which benefited from strong growth in new orders and output," Pranjul Bhandari, Chief India Economist at HSBC, said.

As per the survey, overall sales rose at the fastest pace in close to five years. Subsequently, production growth strengthened to a 15-month high in July and outpaced the series trend.

Indian manufacturers remained confident of a rise in output over the course of the coming 12 months, but the overall level of positive sentiment fell to its lowest mark in three years.

Companies continued to hire extra staff at the start of the second fiscal quarter, but they did so to the least extent in eight months.

Moreover, a vast majority of panellists (93 per cent) indicated that employment numbers were sufficient for current requirements. Indeed, outstanding business volumes increased only marginally in July. *—PTI*

Excelsoft, Jyoti Global Plast announce IPOs

NEW DELHI, 1 AUG

Excelsoft Technologies and Jyoti Global Plast are set to tap capital markets with upcoming IPOs aimed at fuelling their respective growth plans.

Mysuru-based Excelsoft Technologies, a vertical SaaS firm specialising in learning and assessment, has received SEBI approval for a Rs 700 crore IPO comprising a Rs 210 crore fresh issue and a Rs 490 crore offer for sale by promoters.

The proceeds will fund land purchase, facility upgrades, IT infrastructure enhancement, and general corporate purposes. With 71 clients across 17 countries, including Pearson and Brigham Young University – Idaho, the company reported FY24 revenue of Rs 198.3 crore and a profit of Rs 12.75 crore.

The shares will be listed on BSE and NSE. *—PTI*

Rupee rises by 12P, closes at 87.53 against USD

MUMBAI, 1 AUG

The rupee appreciated 12 paise to close at 87.53 (provisional) against the US dollar on Friday, on lower crude prices and suspected RBI interventions as US President Donald Trump's sweeping new tariffs triggered fresh concerns over a much wider disruption in the global trade landscape. Forex traders said the US' imposition of a 25 per cent tariff on Indian exports triggered risk-off sentiment and heightened concerns regarding further rupee depreciation. At the inter-bank foreign exchange, the domestic unit opened at 87.60 against the greenback, touching an intra-day high of 87.20 against the American currency. *—PTI*

Adani Power Q1 profit falls 16% to ₹3.3K crore

NEW DELHI, 1 AUG

Adani Power Ltd (APL) on Friday reported 15.53 per cent decline in consolidated net profit at Rs 3,305 crore for June quarter, mainly impacted by lower merchant tariffs and elevated operating expenses. The Adani Group entity had a net profit (profit after tax) of Rs 3,913 crore in April-June period of 2024-25 financial year, a company statement said. The profit in the quarter slipped "on account of lower merchant tariffs and elevated operating expenses following acquisitions," it said. However, on a quarter-on-quarter basis, the net profit was higher by 27.1 per cent due to higher one-time income and continuing EBITDA on a sequential basis. *—PTI*

TARIFF SITUATION 'EVOLVING'

Apple India hits record revenue in June quarter

NEW DELHI/SAN FRANCISCO, 1 AUG

iPhone-maker Apple clinched revenue records in over two dozen markets, including India, in June quarter earnings that topped street expectations, but CEO Tim Cook called out the "evolving" tariff situation and estimated September-quarter tariff costs at about USD 1.1 billion.

During the Q3 FY2025 earnings, Cook spoke of opening new stores in India and the UAE later this year.

He said the company saw iPhone growth in every geographic segment and double-digit growth in emerging markets, including India, the Middle East, South Asia, and Brazil. The situation around tariffs is "evolving", he said, adding that for the June quarter, the company incurred about USD 800 million of tariff-related costs.

For the June quarter, the tech titan reported revenue of USD 94.04 billion, the 10 per cent year-on-year growth topping Wall Street expectations, while net profit came in at USD 23.42 billion, up 9.2 per cent from a year ago.

Meanwhile, Apple shook off a thicket of tariffs and a botched entry into artificial intelligence to accelerate its revenue growth during its springtime quarter, but the trendsetting tech company still faces a bumpy road ahead that could lead to higher iPhone prices.

The company's iPhone sales surged 13 per cent from a year ago to USD 44.6 billion. *—PTI*

India collects ₹1.96L crore GST in July

NEW DELHI, 1 AUG

The Gross Goods and Services Tax (GST) collection increased 7.5 per cent to about Rs 1.96 lakh crore in July on higher domestic revenues. The GST mop-up was Rs 1.82 lakh crore in July 2024. Last month, the collection was Rs 1.84 lakh crore.

The gross domestic revenue grew 6.7 per cent to Rs 1.43 lakh crore, while imports tax rose 9.5 per cent to Rs 52,712 crore. GST refunds shot up 66.8 per cent year-on-year to Rs 27,147 crore. The net GST revenue stood at Rs 1.69 lakh crore in July 2025, recording a 1.7 per cent year-on-year growth.

EY India Tax Partner Saurabh Agarwal said that despite some global pressures and temporary dips, the overall trend shows a stable consumption pattern and consistent growth trajectory of the economy.

"The government's timely refund process is also a great help to businesses, ensuring they have the working capital they need," he said. *—PTI*

Jane Street not cooperating with IT probe, says sources

NEW DELHI, 1 AUG

US-based Global trading firm Jane Street is reportedly not cooperating with the Income Tax Department in an ongoing investigation against it, according to sources.

Sources told ANI that the company's servers, which are crucial for the investigation, are located outside India, and officials are facing access restrictions.

"Access to the servers is being blocked," one of the sources said.

Additionally, the firm's books of accounts are also maintained outside India, despite Indian company law requiring them to be kept within the country. This has created further hurdles in the probe.

Sources said that Jane Stree, has only a minimal staff presence in India, and even those employees are not cooperating with the authorities. The lack of support from the company has slowed down the probes.

On 4 July, SEBI passed an interim order to recover one of the highest ever illegal gain made by the firm. *—ANI*

Neuralink begin test trials for brain chips in UK

BENGALURU, 1 AUG

Elon Musk's brain-computer interface company, Neuralink, is set to begin a clinical trial in the UK, targeting individuals living with severe paralysis caused by conditions such as spinal cord injury and motor neurone disease (ALS).

The study will be conducted in partnership with University College London Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and Newcastle Hospitals, Neuralink announced on X.

The company aims to test its brain implant, which allows users to control digital and physical devices using only their thoughts. Neuralink began its first human trials in 2024 in the United States, after resolving safety concerns previously raised by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA), which had initially blocked its 2022 application.

Founded in 2016, Neuralink has raised USD 1.3 billion in total, including USD 650 million in its most recent funding round.

The company is currently valued at around $9 billion, according to reports citing PitchBook. *—Agencies*

GAMBLING WITH GAMBLING

Google plans real money games on Google Play in India

NEW DELHI, 1 AUG

Google has proposed to allow real money games (RMG) on Google Play in India as part of addressing anti-competition concerns. Besides, the technology major has suggested changes to Google Ads Policy and permits games of skill to be advertised in India, subject to certain conditions.

In November 2024, the Competition Commission of India (CCI) had ordered an investigation against Google on a complaint filed by Winzo Games Pvt Ltd. Against this backdrop, Google has submitted a commitment proposal to the regulator.

PHOTO: X/ Ajay Prasad

"The Play Commitment Proposal, along with the Ads Commitment Proposal, addresses the Hon'ble Commission's concerns by ensuring inclusive access to Google Play and Google Ads for all compliant RMGs, eliminating any alleged competitive disadvantages, and standardising policies to prevent any adverse effects on competition," Google said in the proposal.

In its order, CCI had mentioned the alleged exclusion of certain RMG apps from Google Play could result in a denial of market access and also that the selective onboarding of Daily Fantasy Sports and Rummy apps allegedly distorts the competitive landscape.

Additionally, a federal appeals court has upheld a jury verdict condemning Google's Android app store as an illegal monopoly, clearing the way for a federal judge to enforce a potentially disruptive shakeup that's designed to give consumers more choices.

The unanimous ruling issued Thursday by the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals delivers a double-barrelled legal blow for Google, which has been waylaid in three separate antitrust trials that resulted in different pillars of its internet empire being declared as domineering scofflaws monopolies since late 2023. *—PTI*

Lakshya, Mannepalli enter semifinals of Macau Open

MACAU, 1 AUG

Star Indian shuttler Lakshya Sen and promising Tharun Mannepalli advanced to the men's singles semi-finals of the Macau Open Super 300 badminton tournament after registering hard-fought wins here on Friday.

Taking the court first, the 23-year-old Mannepalli, ranked 47th in the world, showcased speed and a versatile shot selection to edge out China's 87th-ranked Hu Zhe 21-12, 13-21, 21-18 in a 75-minute battle.

Lakshya Sen

Later in the day, Lakshya, a Commonwealth Games gold medallist and second seed here, eked out a tough 21-14 18-21 21-14 victory over Xuan Chen Zhu of China in his quarterfinal that lasted one hour and three minutes.

Lakshya will be up against fifth seed Alwi Farhan of Indonesia, while Mannepalli will take on Malaysia's Justin Hoh in the last-four round.

This marks Mannepalli's maiden semi-final appearance at a BWF Super 300 event. He had reached the quarterfinals at the German Open in February.

However, Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty bowed out of the tournament after losing 14-21, 21-13, 20-22 to the Malaysian combination of Choong Hon Jian and Haikal Muhammad in the quarterfinals.

Mannepalli, who joined the Pullela Gopichand Academy four years ago, has focused on improving his fitness, agility, and movement over the past two years. His hard work paid off this week as he also stunned top seed Lee Cheuk Yiu of Hong Kong in the last eight.

The Indian, who won gold at the 37th National Games, was trailing 4-7 in the first game before rallying to 12-9. He then took control and scored six straight points from 15-11 to seal the game.

In the decider, Mannepalli surged to a 5-0 lead and maintained a healthy advantage up to 19-15. It got tense towards the finish as he squandered three points, with Hu sending two returns on his forehand corner.

However, Mannepalli stayed composed and landed a timely body smash to earn two match points. He secured the win with a precise push to Hu's backhand corner and raised his arms in celebration.—*PTI*

Tharun Mannepalli

Rain stops play after Prasidh removes Atkinson

Shoulder injury rules out Woakes from remainder of 5th Test

India players celebrate the dismissal of England's Gus Atkinson during the second day of the fifth Test *PHOTO: PTI*

LONDON, 1 AUG

Rain has stopped play in the third session on Day 2 of the fifth Test at The Oval. England have taken the lead, but India need only one more wicket to bowl out the hosts.

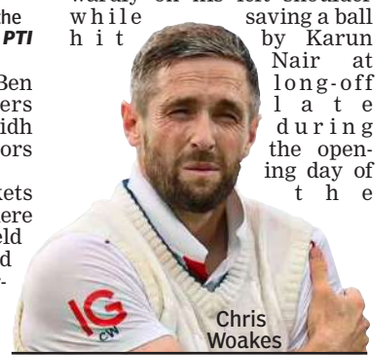
England have reached 242/8 after 48 overs, with Harry Brook and Josh Tongue at the crease. After an explosive 92-run opening partnership between Zak Crawley and Ben Duckett, India pacers Mohammed Siraj and Prasidh Krishna pulled the visitors back into the contest.

Siraj took three wickets while Prasidh took four. There has also been some on-field tension, with Joe Root and Prasidh involved in a verbal spat and Akash Deep giving Duckett a controversial send-off. Earlier in the day, India's lower middle-order and tail fell apart, as they lost four wickets in 34 balls, lasting only 28 minutes with the bat on Day 2.

India has a mountain to climb from here if they are to win the Test and level the series

Injury-plagued England were dealt a severe blow on Friday after seamer **Chris Woakes** was ruled out of the ongoing fifth and final Test against India with a suspected shoulder dislocation.

The all-rounder had to leave the field after landing awkwardly on his left shoulder while saving a ball hit by Karun Nair at long-off late during the opening day of the match on Thursday.


Chris Woakes

Woakes looked in visible pain as he walked off the field with his left arm wrapped in his sweater. "England seamer Chris Woakes will continue to be monitored throughout the remainder of the Rothesay Fifth Test at The Kia Oval, following a left shoulder injury sustained on day one of the match against India," the England and Wales Cricket Board said in a statement.

"At this stage, the injury has ruled him out of any further participation in the Test. A further assessment will be conducted after the series."

Earlier on Thursday, Woakes' teammate Gus Atkinson said Woakes' injury didn't look good.

"I don't know too much about it, but it doesn't look great," Atkinson said after India reached 204 for 6 at stumps on the rain-affected day. "It's a big shame, last game of the series, and when anyone gets injured, it's a shame. I'm hoping it's not too bad, and whatever it is, he'll get full support from everyone." —*PTI*

DULEEP TROPHY

Shardul to lead West Zone; Jaiswal, Sarfaraz included

MUMBAI, 1 AUG

India and Mumbai all-rounder Shardul Thakur was on Friday named the West Zone captain for the Duleep Trophy to be played in September.

The 15-member squad also includes India opener Yashasvi Jaiswal, middle-order batters Sarfaraz Khan and Shreyas Iyer, as a total of seven Mumbai players have been named in the team.

Ruturaj Gaikwad will bolster the middle-order while Saurashtra's Harvik Desai and Maharashtra's Saurabh Nawale are the wicketkeepers.

Seven others, including

Shardul Thakur

Mumbai's Musheer Khan, were named among the standby players. However, senior batters Ajinkya Rahane and Cheteshwar Pujara were not included in the squad.

The six-team Duleep Trophy is moving back to the zonal format as the tournament will be the 2025-26 domestic season opener, with state selectors from respective zones naming the squads.

The tournament was held between four teams, India A, B, C, and D, picked by the national selectors last year.

South Zone were the winners when the tournament was held in the zonal format last in 2023-24, as they and the West secured direct entries to the semifinals to be held in Bengaluru.

The West Zone squad was selected by the selection committee chaired by Mumbai's Sanjay Patil, Baroda's Prayan Dave, Maharashtra's Akshay Darekar, Sandip Maniyar from Saurashtra Cricket Association, and Kirat Damani from the Gujarat Cricket Association. —*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Khalid Jamil named Indian men's football head coach

NEW DELHI, 1 AUG

Khalid Jamil, who famously guided the unheralded Aizawl Football Club to the I-League title in 2017, was on Friday named head coach of the Indian national men's football team, becoming the first Indian in 13 years to occupy the coveted post. The 48-year-old Jamil, a former India international and currently in charge of Indian Super League side Jamshedpur FC, was selected by the All India Football Federation's (AIFF) executive committee from a three-man shortlist. The other two contenders were former India head coach Stephen Constantine and Stefan Tarkovic, who previously managed the Slovakia national team. An AFC Pro License Diploma holder, Jamil will succeed Spaniard Manolo Marquez, who parted ways with the AIFF last month following India's recent struggles. —*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Good start by Diksha at AIG Women's Open

PORTHCAWL, 1 AUG

Indian golfer Diksha Dagar carded a one-under 71 to lie tied 30th after the first round of the AIG Women's Open, the last Major of the year for women. Diksha, making her sixth appearance at the Women's Open, picked up four birdies against three bogeys in unpredictable weather conditions here. She was lying Tied-30th after being Tied-14th till the 15th hole. She picked birdies on the first, seventh, ninth and the 11th and the bogeys came on the sixth, eighth and the 11th. Diksha, who is the sole Indian in the field this week at Porthcawl, finished Tied-21st in 2023, her best performance at the Open.—*PTI*

Benedicton ends 47th in men's 100m butterfly

SINGAPORE, 1 AUG

India's Rohit Benedicton signed off in 47th place in the men's 100m butterfly at the swimming World Championships here on Friday. The 21-year-old reigning national champion clocked 53.92s, well below his personal best, to be placed last in his heat and outside the top 40 in the overall standings. The top 16 swimmers progressed to the semifinals.Rohit had entered the meet on the back of a strong domestic season. At the Senior National Championships in June, he had clocked 52.57s in the same event, registering the 'Best Indian Time'.—*PTI*

Nawaz's 3-wicket lead Pak to a win over West Indies

LAUDERHILL, 1 AUG

Mohammad Nawaz took three wickets in an over to propel Pakistan to a 14-run win over West Indies in the series-opening Twenty20 cricket international Thursday in Florida. Pakistan was sent in to bat and posted 178 for six, led by Saim Ayub's 57 from 38 deliveries. The debate about that was above or below par at this venue was partially answered when West Indies openers Johnson Charles and 18-year-old Jewel Andrew, making his T20 international debut, scored at just over six an over to the halfway point in reply. After conceding 20 runs in his first three overs, left-arm spinner Nawaz dramatically shifted the contest. Pakistan 178 for 6 (Ayub 57, Shamar 3-30) beat West Indies 164 for 7 (Andrew 35, Charles 35, Nawaz 3-23) by 14 runs —*PTI*

RURAL SPORTS FESTIVAL ISHA GRAMOTSAVAM TO START IN MYSORE

BENGALURU, 1 AUG

The 17th edition of Isha Gramotsavam, India's largest rural sports festival, will be held across six states starting on August 10 in Mysore.

This year's edition will span over 35,000 villages across Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Puducherry, and new entrant Odisha. Envisioned by spiritual leader Sadhguru, Isha Gramotsavam will witness participation of over 6000 teams and more than 50,000 athletes, including 5,000 women.

The tournament will feature men's volleyball and throwball for women, with teams progressing from cluster-level matches to divisional rounds and culminating in a grand final on September 21 at the Adiyogi, Isha Yoga Centre in Coimbatore. Swami Pulaka, an Isha Brahmachari and co-ordinator of Isha Gramotsavam, said the festival was aimed at reviving the rural sporting spirit of India, and no professional player will be allowed to participate in it.

"Launched by Sadhguru in 2004, Isha Gramotsavam is not for professional players, but for everyday rural people, including farmers, fishermen, daily-wage workers, homemakers, and school children.

Teams can be formed only with players from the same village panchayat. Registration is free," he said."Competing teams stand a chance to win from a prize pool of Rs 67 lakh, with Rs lakh each awarded to the winners in both men's and women's categories." —*PTI*

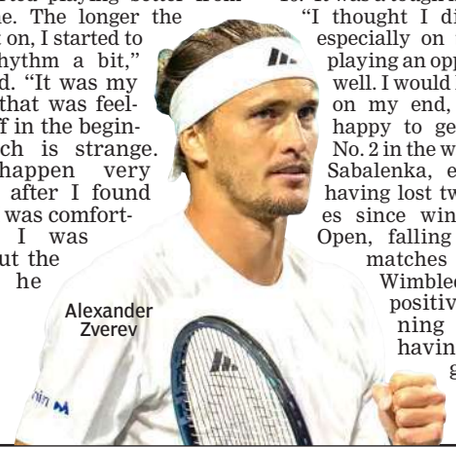
CANADIAN OPEN 2025

Alexander Zverev wins; Medvedev crashes out

TORONTO, 1 AUG

Top-seeded Alexander Zverev of Germany beat Matteo Arnaldi of Italy 6-7 (5), 6-3, 6-2 on Thursday night in the third round of the National Bank Open to reach 500 match victories.

The 28-year-old Zverev, the 2017 champion, is the first ATP Tour player born in 1990 or later to win 500 matches. He won on clay in Munich in April for his 24th tour title. "I think I started playing better from the baseline. The longer the match went on, I started to find my rhythm a bit," Zverev said. "It was my backhand that was feeling a bit off in the beginning, which is strange. Doesn't happen very often. But after I found that shot, I was comfortable and I was happy about the level," he added.


Alexander Zverev

Gauff reaches Round of 16;

Kessler downs Andreeva

Coco Gauff overcame 14 more double-faults to beat Veronika Kudermetova of Russia 4-6, 7-5, 6-2 on Thursday night in the National Bank Open.

Two days after surviving 23 double-faults and a third-set tiebreaker against fellow American Danielle Collins, the top-seeded Gauff rallied from a set and break down against Kudermetova to reach the round of 16."It was a tough match," Gauff said. "I thought I did well mentally, especially on the return. I was playing an opponent who served well. I would like to serve better on my end, but overall, just happy to get through."Gauff, No. 2 in the world behind Aryna Sabalenka, entered the week having lost two straight matches since winning the French Open, falling in her opening matches in Berlin and Wimbledon."It does give positives that I am winning these matches, having one part of my game on a crutch," Gauff said. —*PTI*